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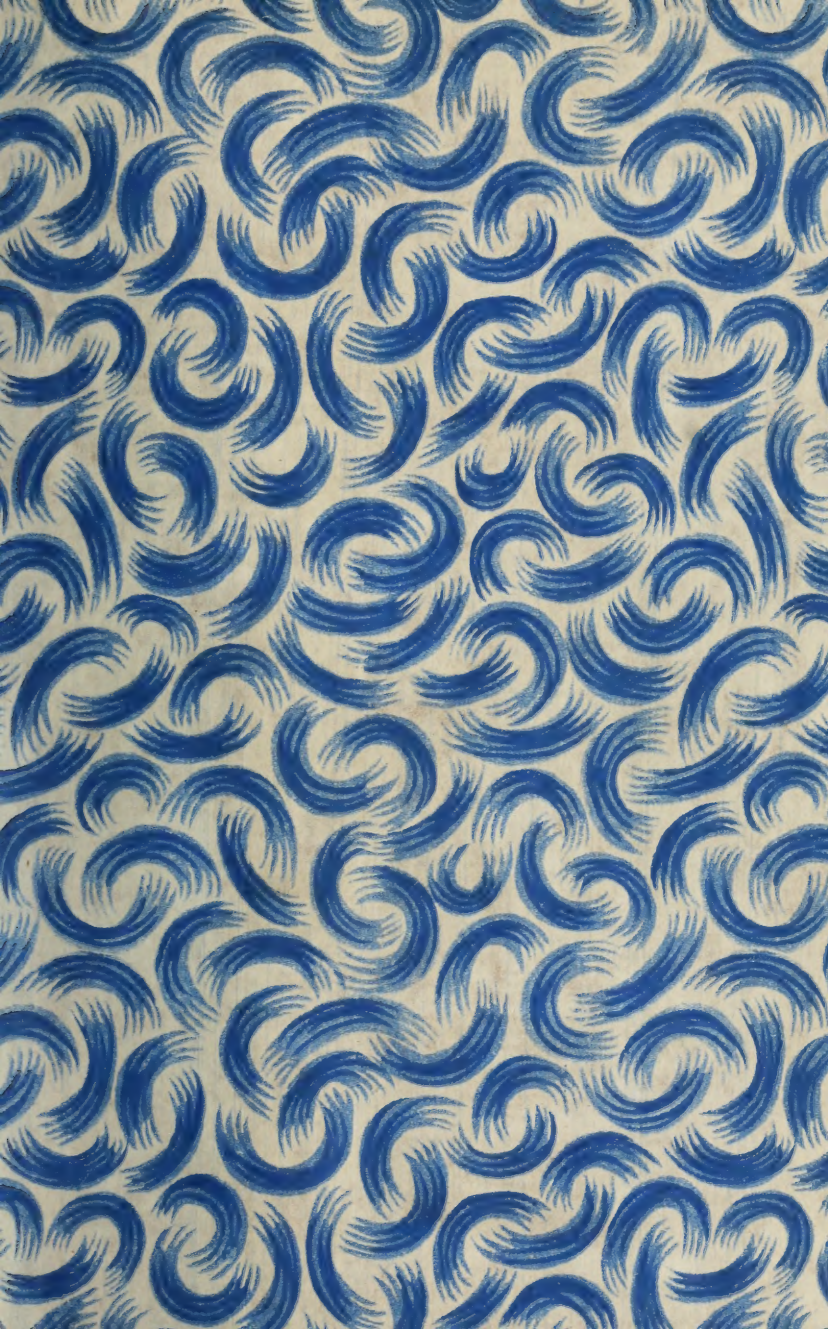
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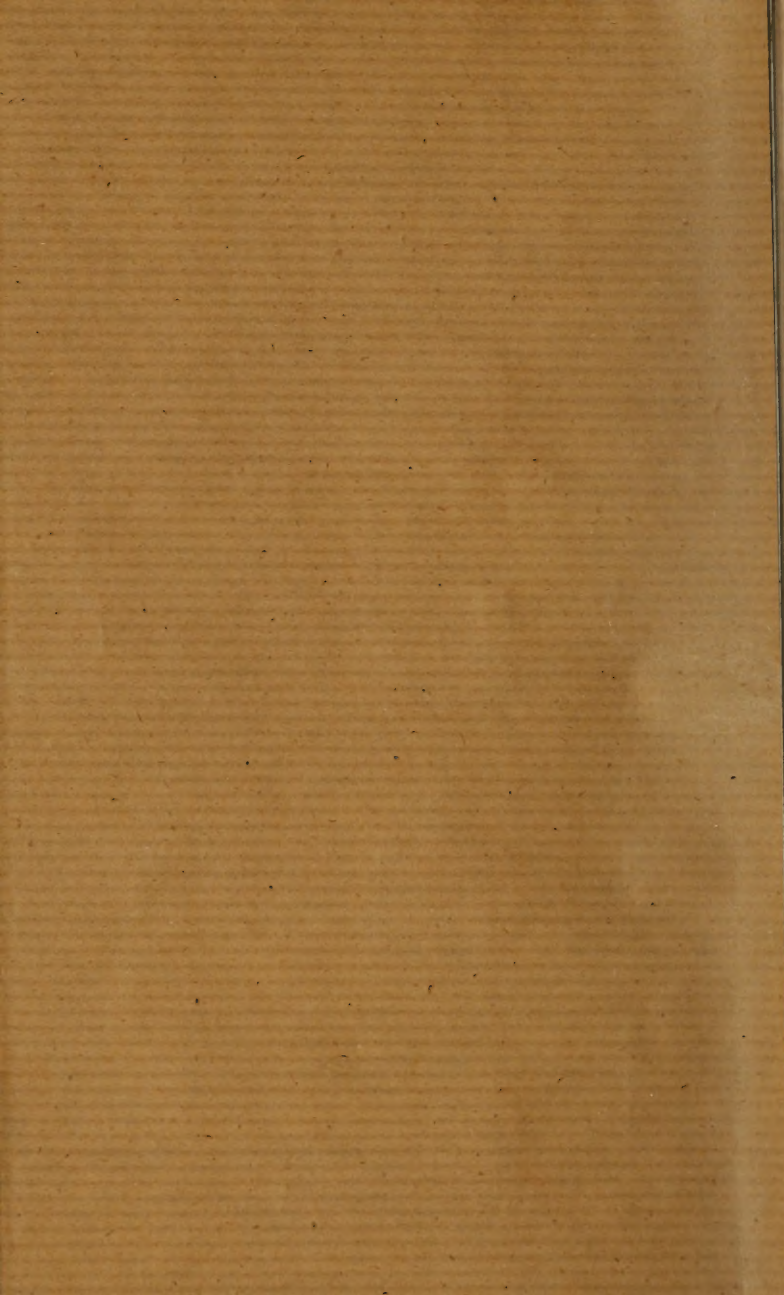
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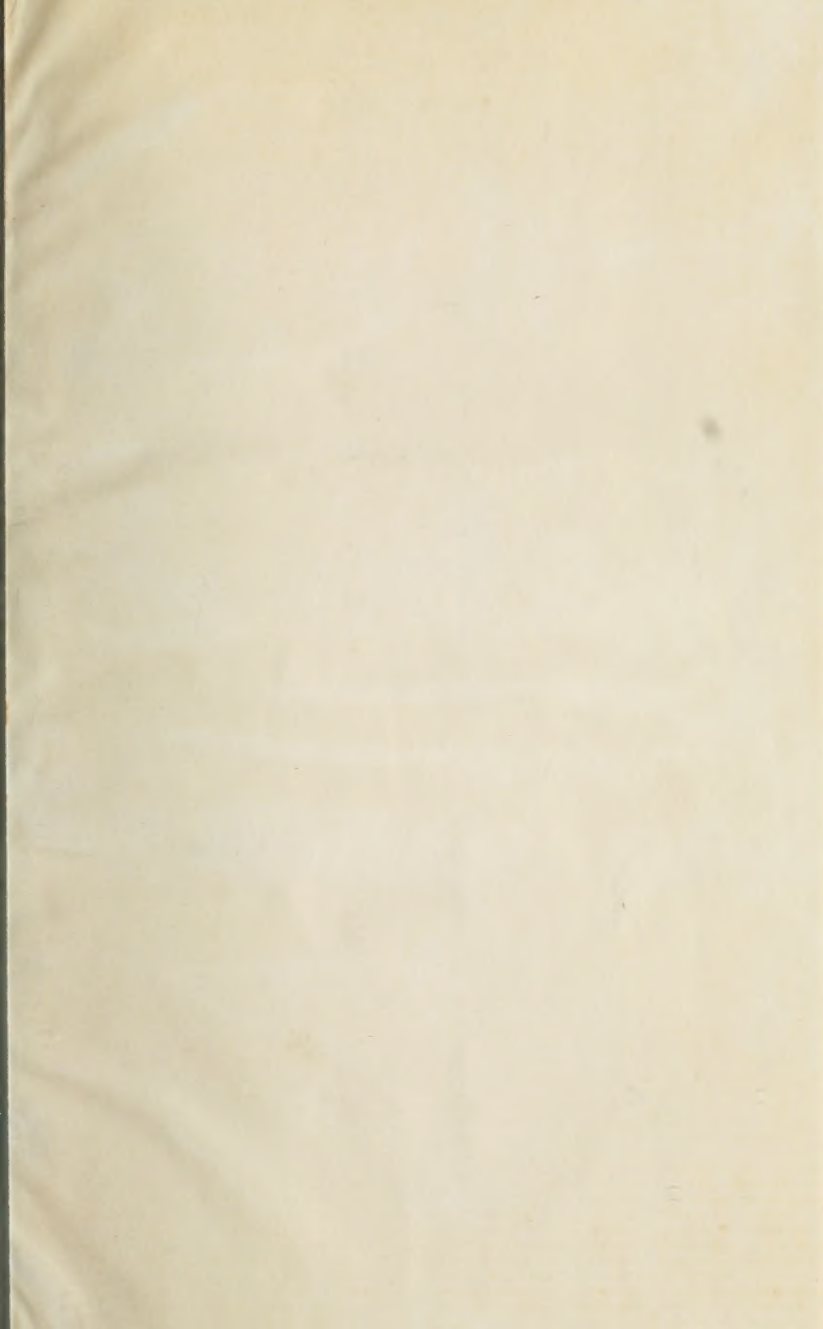
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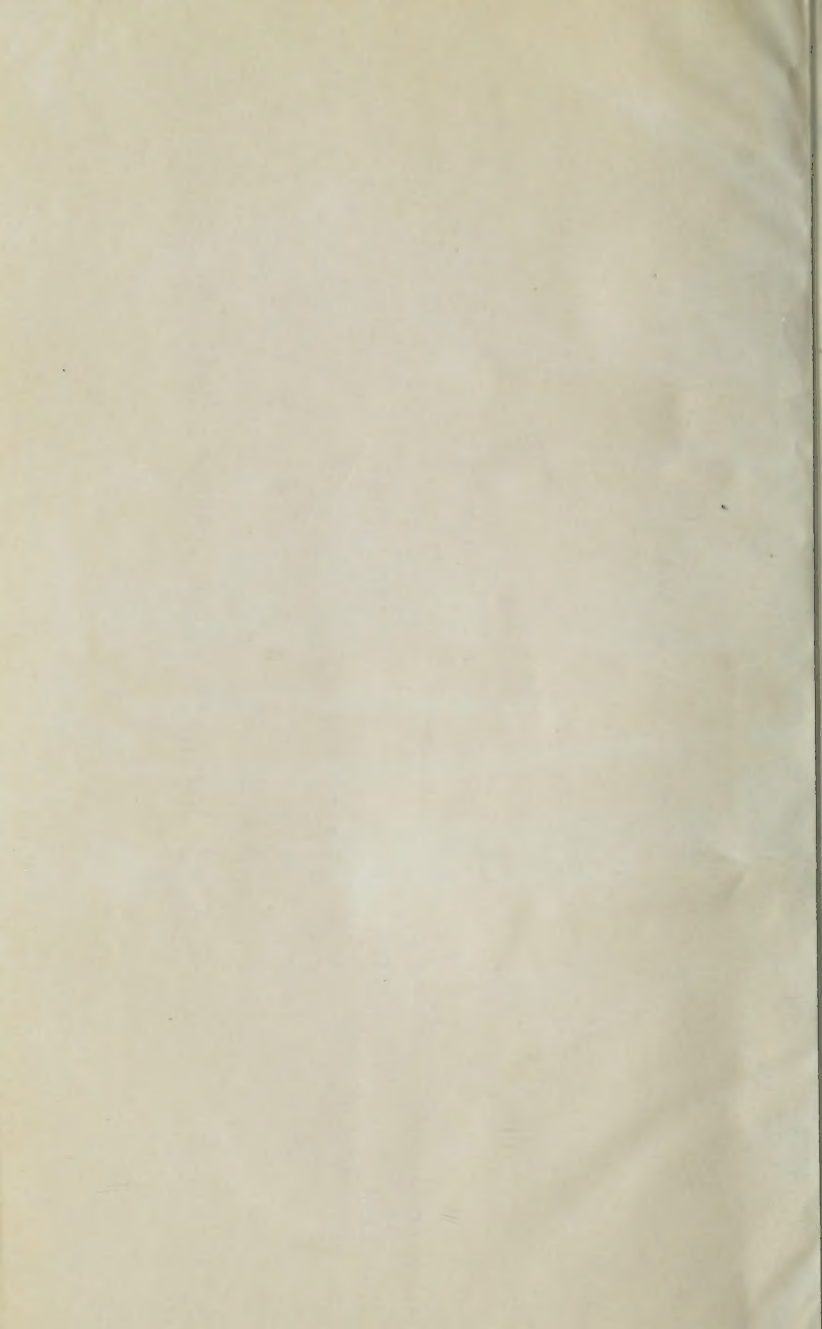


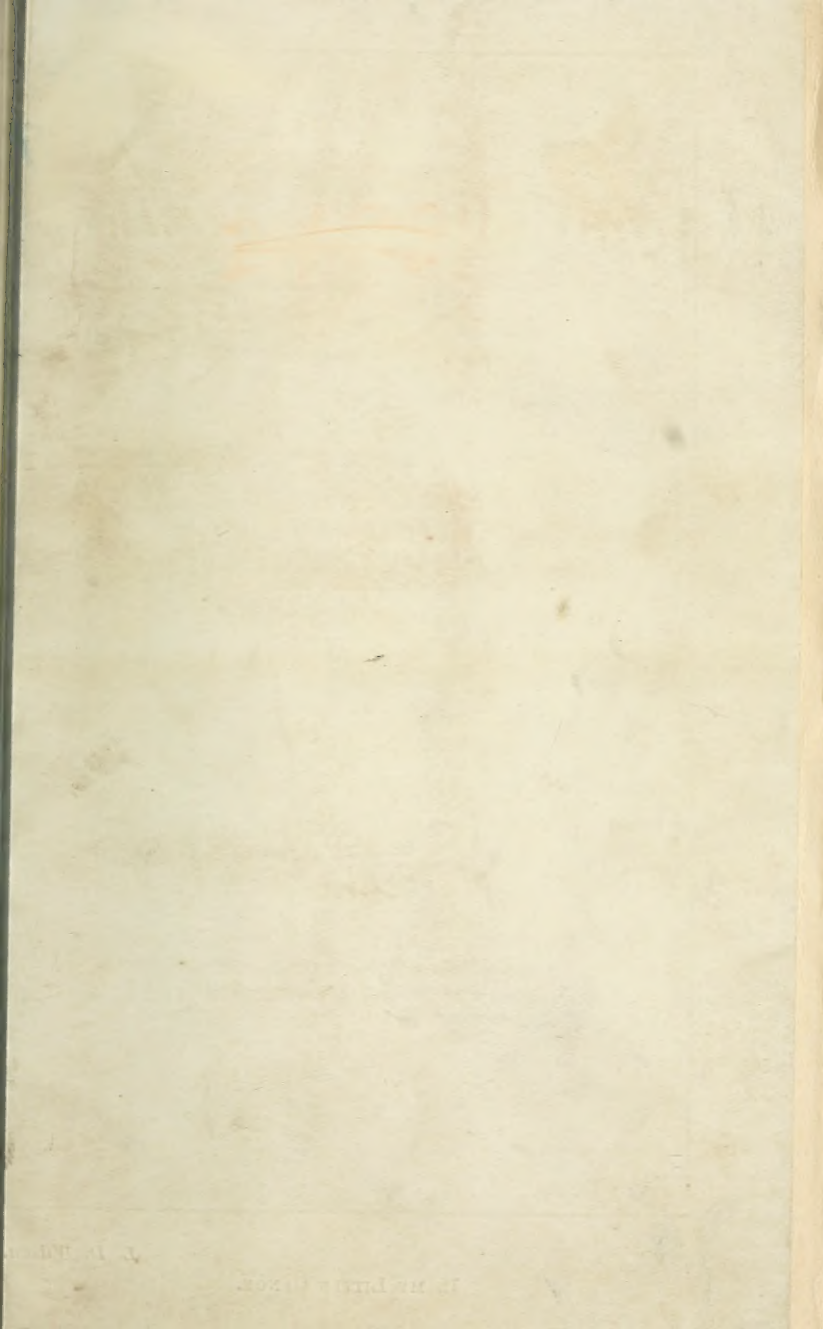
THE UNIVERSITY OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA













L. D. Wilson.

IN MY LITTLE CANOE.

A
BURMESE WONDERLAND

*A Tale of Travel in
Lower and Upper Burma*

BY
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“A Burmese Enchantment” : “A Burmese Loneliness,”
etc.

Oh Nat ! Observe the serenity of mind that good men possess.

Oh Nat ! Imprint upon thy heart the thirty-eight precepts.

—*Discourse of Buddha.*

CALCUTTA AND SIMLA
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1922

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To
The People of Burma
This Book is
Affectionately Dedicated

PREFACE.

YESTERDAY, while I was planning the arrangement of these pages, the relics in the Arakan Pagoda were seen to fly up towards the spire, and hang there, glittering about the crown. The omen is surely propitious.

This morning a Burmese friend of mine, while bathing in the Irrawaddy, was seized round the waist by a *Ye Bilu*, or Water God, which would have dragged him away, had not the neighbours rushed in and driven off the River *Nat*. Maung Gyi himself has since confirmed the story. "My Lord has correctly heard the facts, except that the *Ye Bilu* also went off with my *lungyi*¹ leaving me 'a modest man' to reach home in extreme confusion."

There are two Burmas. There is one with Diarchy which is dull enough, but affords sport to quite a number of people. The other is half esoteric. It is just a Wonderland. Like Alice, you can follow a White Rabbit down into it with the pleasurable assurance of exciting adventures. Not long ago a little bird suddenly began to bet; and a giant mushroom, far larger than Alice's, caused a thrill of excitement. About the same time

¹ Skirt

twin banyan trees, which had grown into each other, began shedding leaves in pairs, and so continued till their owner, infuriated at having his crops trampled by sight-seers, cut them down. Shortly afterwards the Chindwin River was observed to flow backwards, and a man of impeccable sobriety saw two moons rise together in Shwebo.

It is easy enough to overlook this magic land. In a fretful age of materialism, you may live for years amongst a people, and never know them. Cute, clever people cannot see enchantments. Wonderlands are only revealed to the simple-hearted. Peter Pan, you remember, never grew up to doubt the reality of the *Never Never Land*. People rightly tuned to their surroundings discover strange and hidden things, more wonderful than those mentioned above. They see birds that flash in the sun, and tiny flowers that spangle the grass. They read delicious meaning in words and hear melodies floating on the air. You and I, dear Reader, being initiated, will do all this; and draw romance from the stores of history. We will revive from the obscurity of legend brave men of ancient days and make them live again, and cultivate in them friendships that shall last for ever.

To do so in these restless times is more than ever soothing, but also more than ever difficult. To-day there are so many distractions. So many details claim attention. Our sense of appreciation is dulled by twentieth-century shocks and excitements; and the

restful atmosphere essential to philosophy is entirely wanting. All of us—British and Burmese—are a little out of tune, a little too engrossed with bickerings : so that we have drifted apart out of the old happy association.

It is not easy, all at once, to adjust ourselves to the new world that has opened before us, in which men are more practical, perhaps, more efficient : but also more material. The hard facts of war have cut across our lives, giving us new standards, new ideals. Our work and opportunities are not those which develop humanity and sentiment. There are social claims on our leisure. We are hedged about with barriers of convention, and worked to the point of exhaustion. Modern life, with its motors, clubs, offices and so on, robs us of little educations and little intimacies. All these, and a hundred other trifles, tend to alienate us, and prevent us from acquiring that insight and personal sympathy essential to understanding. Lastly, as the cumulative result of all this, languages are neglected.

Intimate speech is the essence of friendship. But to be intimate, intercourse must be easy and free from strain. Sympathy is only possible where there is an exchange of ideas. Only thus are motives, thoughts and sentiments understood. Without these conditions, individuality disappears, and with it initiative. Men work by rule, not by heart : and soon they cease to care. The human element is lost, the mechanical substituted. Leaders degenerate into mere clerks,

whose personality is crushed by deadly routine : while quill-driving becomes the main object, instead of remaining, as it should, subordinate to all others. In this artificial atmosphere men may reside twenty years in the East, without ever having *lived* there.

In these days we are, no doubt, in a state of transition. The old order has gone, the new has not yet developed. Ours is an Era of change in which precedents and institutions crumble. Nothing is stable, and dangers threaten which we seem too greedy, selfish and callous to avert. The nations, Burma included, are deaf to advice, and blind to example. They deny history, and hurry down a road which, if history means anything, leads to rank ruin and revolution. It is however our imperative duty to do what we can. Nor should the value of individual effort be underestimated. We can all exert an influence for good, for harmony, for unity of purpose, and for the calming of asperities. Here in Burma a basis of good-will exists, and that is half the battle. Burmese and British have assuredly fallen apart, but not from ill-will. The estrangement is due to ignorance of language, thought and customs ; to pre-occupations, transfers and over-work arising out of the war. All this has interrupted personal friendships and hindered those studies which alone can awaken mutual sympathy. We should now set ourselves urgently to repair the damage.

The only true appeal is to the heart. The only successful activities are those achieved without drudgery. The cultivation of mutual regard and sympathy is a work in which every soul in Burma can and should co-operate, by strengthening our present happy relations, by teaching moderation on both sides, and by stopping, if possible, that drifting apart of aims and interests which all thinking men know has set in. Individually we can effect little. But collectively we can do a great deal to calm the acerbity and restiveness of our times. Incidentally we may perhaps add a little to the happiness of others and of ourselves, for, in Barrie's immortal words, "Those who bring sunshine cannot keep it from themselves."

Mandalay, 1st January, 1922.

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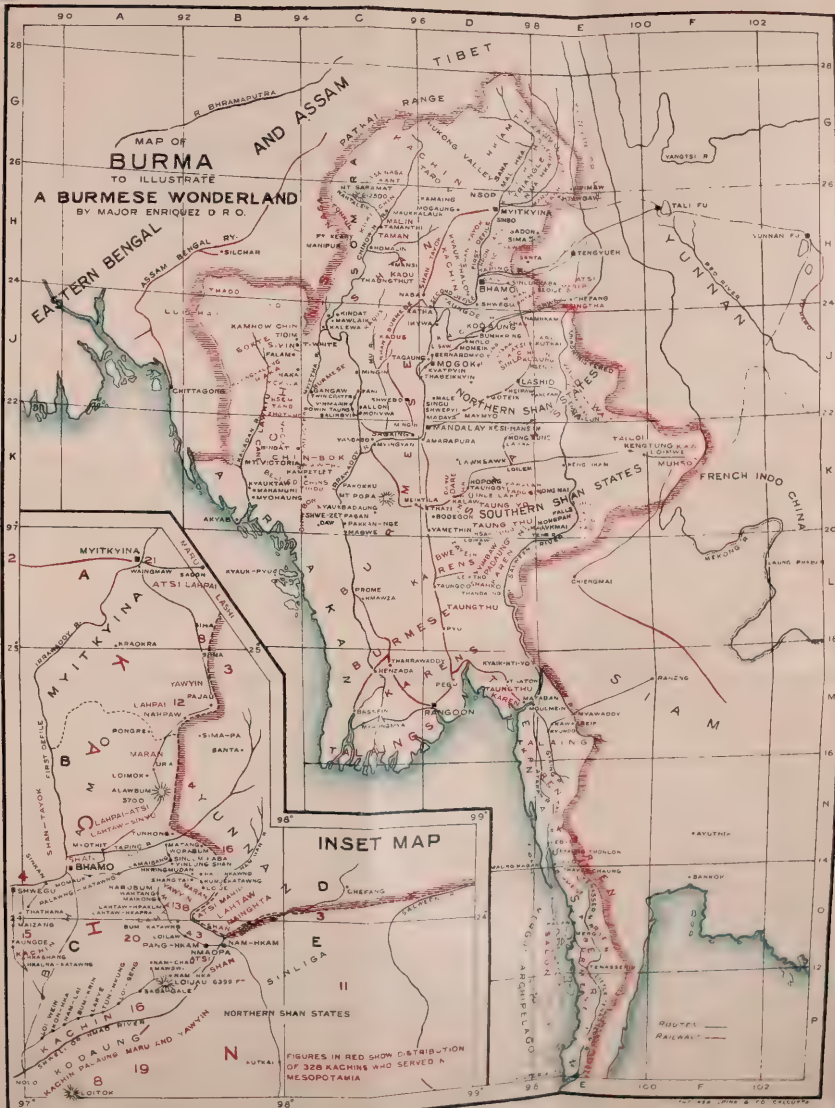
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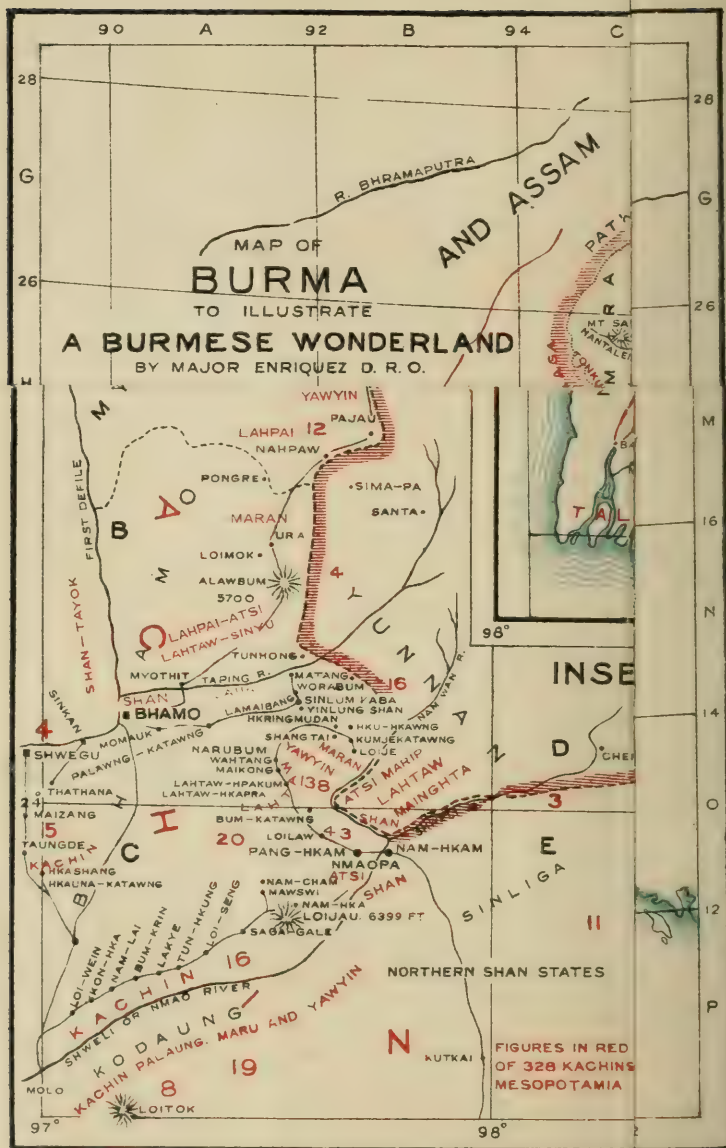
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A map of Eastern Bengal and Assam, showing the region's geographical features and administrative boundaries. The map is titled "EASTERN BENGAL" and "ASSAM". It depicts the region's coastline, major rivers, and the locations of various towns and cities. The map is oriented with North at the top.

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BOOK ONE :—LOWER BURMA.

CHAPTER I.

BY ROAD AND RIVER.

THREE years of recruiting in Burma has afforded very special opportunities for travel, and has brought me into contact with all manner of people—from courtly, polished Burmese, to the uncultured folk of the frontier hills. The material collected is too extensive for one volume. It falls naturally into several parts, of which one, relating to the Burmese, Karens and Talaings of Lower and Upper Burma, is dealt with here. Another part, concerning Kachins of the frontier is treated separately in *A Burmese Arcady* and will appear simultaneously.

Burma is a large country. It is bigger than France, even bigger than Germany was before the War. An area so extensive, stretching as it does from latitude 28° to within a few degrees of the Equator, is naturally diverse in character. In Upper Burma there are great dry-zones of scrub, and wet-zones of luxuriant forest, cultivated plains, and a wilderness of frontier hills.

Lower Burma is largely flat—a rich land of paddy. Then there is the delta—a labyrinth of water-ways:

while Tenasserim on the eastern side is hilly and remarkable for its beautiful scenery. Over all this there is an *atmosphere*—a something undefined which has appealed irresistibly to all who have fallen under its influence. The appeal lies no doubt in the happy gaiety of the people, the kindly tolerance of their customs and institutions, the colour, the monuments, and the grace. And in addition, Nature has endowed this land with water-falls, rapids, whirlpools, hot-springs and volcanoes. There are mountains, gigantic caves, and stately, irresistible rivers. Upon these has fallen the mantle of romance. The country is saturated with history. Legend broods over it. A kindly indolence lingers amidst the fretful restlessness of our age. Here *Nats*¹ maintain an undisputed sovereignty : and heroes of long ago survive in the names of places. Their spirits haunt the scene of former exploits. Imaginative names inspire the least significant objects. And if nothing else occurs there are always pagodas, beautiful in themselves, beautiful in meaning, and picturesque and original in situation.

On the whole, communications are bad. To enjoy Burma we must work. We must leave the beaten track, sleep in simple village sheds, travel in bullock-carts and country-boats, rest at noon beneath tamarinds, and quench our thirst at way-side water pots, which pious women fill for merit. We must climb mountains

and follow dusty roads, and reach those remote and holy shrines which are dearest to the heart of the people. Here, indeed, we shall find a *Wonderland* which will charm and bewitch us with its allurements.

In Lower Burma we have to deal with a confused population. The country was originally Talaing, but Talaings have now almost disappeared. Talaings, Burmese, Karens, Chinese and Arakanese have been swept in by victory, defeat and migration, and are now scattered about without system. They are attractive people—gay, humorous and often intellectual. They themselves have suggested to my mind much of what is here written, and I am glad of this opportunity of acknowledging it. They are little spoiled by the abominable spirit of our times. This book has been written amidst all the unhappy querulousness, ingratitude and childishness of the years succeeding the war. I confess to many bitter disappointments. Political agitators, by their wicked Indian doctrine, have sadly damaged Burma's reputation for tolerance and sense. It would be absurd to deny it. The Burmese have been the weak victims of a deliberate conspiracy, and the most disturbing feature has been the ease with which the moderate majorities have permitted themselves to be bullied. We must however in fairness consider all the surrounding circumstances, and allow that they were pushed and poked most reluctantly into the mud of politics. Fortunately, good sense is inherent in these people. The old friendship between us, which enemies

have deliberately sought to undermine, has been proof against the assault. As in the past, so now, there is mutual respect—and sometimes affection. We are here amongst enlightened, quick, generous folk—gay and spendthrift to a fault. They have many weaknesses, and these we will expose remorselessly in another place : but here we will only confess that their wickedness, no less than their virtue, often appeals to our own instinct.

And the children—how fascinating they are!—Little San Pe and San Kwa who plague me when I write, remove my pencils, and frankly prefer tea with me to dinner with their mother—well, it would be a flinty old bosom that could resist San Kwa.

Last, but very far from least, there are the women, so dainty, so dangerous. At least, I suppose they are dangerous, though a determined bachelor like myself cannot really know. Still, with that figure, those manners, those bright eyes and flashing jewels : with a scarf blowing about her shoulders in the breeze, and sunshine beating amber through a paper parasol, she *must* be dangerous. The Burmese themselves certainly find her so, and have all been on the verge of suicide at least once or twice. Oh Ma Beda, were you *really* so very simple ?

CHAPTER II.

KYAİK-HTI-YO.

(*Map square D. M.*)

By far the most extraordinary place in Burma, and therefore the most sacred in Buddhist eyes, is the Kyaik-hti-yo Pagoda—a small shrine built upon a wonderfully balanced rock. This pagoda has a wide reputation, and is an object of pilgrimage from all parts of the country. Unfortunately the only opportunity I had of visiting it was at the height of the rains. The nine-mile march from the railway at Kyaikto to the foot of the hills at Kin-mun Zahkan is, at that season, a trying experience. A road hardly exists. In August the country is inundated, and all the bridges are in a state of collapse. And as if angry at our defiance, the Heavens growled and rained upon us with incredible fury. On reaching the *Zayat*, or pilgrim-shed, at Kin-mun Zahkan late in the afternoon it was at once obvious that the baggage carts could never reach us. The *Thugyi*,¹ a Karen, rose to the occasion nobly. We were soon warm and dry before a cheerful fire, and replete with a full meal of rice and bamboo-tops, which the *Thugyi* himself helped to cook. I have seldom enjoyed

¹ Headman.

a meal and a pipe more : and since a journey to Kyaikhti-yo is an important and propitious pilgrimage for every Burman, the buoyant spirit of picnic could not be quenched by any amount of misfortune. As a matter of fact the Karen villagers brought in all the baggage before morning from where the carts had stranded, and even carried a meal to my Kachin orderlys who were sticking nobly to rear-guard duties in a smother of rain.

A *Nat* has his shrine by the rest-shed where the sharp ascent began next morning. His attributes, a tiger and a demon, sufficiently denote his vindictive character. Pilgrims are careful to *shiko* him before starting. This is not a formality to neglect. As it was, we met a gigantic black scorpion on the road, and on the night of our return a tiger pulled one of our men out of the shed, though the fellow let out such an unearthly yell that the poor tiger dropped him and fled. The *Nat* was clearly affronted by the fact that this man had surreptitiously killed and eaten a fowl near the shrine.

The weather now relented. We should even have got up the hill dry but for a spiteful squall during the last half mile. The clouds as they lifted unveiled a lovely view over the estuary of the Sittang River where it widens into a broad arm of the sea.

After the first steep climb we followed the hill-crest all the way, with charming scenery on either side. The seven-mile ascent is long, but nowhere steep or difficult, though leeches were troublesome. The frequent ruins of bamboo sheds marked places where, at the

proper season, pilgrims rest and refresh themselves at way-side stalls. This meritorious ascent is divided into stations or stages, some of whose names are suggested by the features of the way, such as—*Stage of the Great Forest : Forked Mangoe Tree :* and *Looking up hill.*¹

Other stages are called after the trials of the climb, such as :—*Hill of Painful Breathing :* and *Hill where the Old Man turned back.*² Poor old man ! I wonder who he was, and what the reason of his unsuccessful pilgrimage. The vicissitudes of this journey are often a severe trial to many of the pilgrims who are old men or tender women. One cannot but reflect upon the fact that Kyaik-hti-yo is the object of the most important pilgrimage in Burma, that it is visited yearly by tens of thousands of people of all ages, that the foot of the hill is but 9 miles from the railway over flat country, and that—well, there is no road !

Gleams of welcome sunshine on the rich green foliage were extremely cheering. I could not help remarking the effect of climate on human nature, and contrasting our present gay mood with yesterday, when in rain and mud I seriously weighed the advisability of turning back as we struggled like Christian in a *Slough of Despond*.

There are several balancing rocks in the vicinity of Kyaik-hti-yo. All are crowned with Pagodas. The

¹ *Maha Myaing Zahkan : Thayet-pin gwa ; and Hmyaw daw Taung.*

² *Shwe Yin Taung : and Hpo Byan Taung.*

pedestal of the first is a squarish boulder, slashed across twice both ways by the sword of *Thagya Min*.¹ These cleavages are extremely clean, accurate and complete. Resting upon this cleft boulder is another, with apparently nothing to prevent it toppling over : and on its summit a little pagoda. There are two more balancing rocks a little further on, and of course again at Kyaik-hti-yo itself.

The Kyaik-hti-yo legend, like so many others where little authentic history survives, is practically a fairy story. It appears however to assign the foundation of the pagoda to Naga Weiza, a Talaing King of Thaton, who married a princess called Shwe Nan Kyin found on the hill. She was born from an egg, lived unhappily at Thaton, was sent home, was chased by a tiger, and died of fright and fatigue. A realistic group of figures near the pagoda shows her dead on the ground with her foster parents beside her. The story records that the foster-father Hpo Kaw Luk was so enraged at her treatment that he summoned the neighbouring Karens to pull down the pagoda with ropes. The Karens however were turned into monkeys, their cries—*Kyo Kwe Kyo Shawk* (Coil the rope on the other hand) being to this day like the cries of men.

The legend of the foundation of the pagoda is mixed up with the above tale, and is better separated.

¹ *Thagya Min* is the King of Heaven. See *A Burmese Loneliness* : Pages 27 and 28.

It states that Teik-tha Yathe, the Hermit of the hill, invited the *Thagya Min* (The King of Heaven) to find a stone shaped like his (the hermit's) head, which should be balanced by magic as if on the shoulders of a man leaning forward. Various stones were brought, but were all rejected by the *Thagya Min*, who cleft them with his sword as already described. Eventually the *Thagya Min* brought a stone himself which he found floating on the sea, and this by his divine power he poised upon the edge of the cliff. It did not in fact touch the ground until the Karens tried to pull it down, and a very small part of it rests on the earth even now. Upon this miraculously balanced rock the *Thagya Min* and the King of Thaton between them, built the pagoda, enshrining therein hairs of Buddha. They called it *Kyak-i-thi-ro* which is the Talaing for *Carried on the Golden Hermit's Head*. The Burmese however have corrupted the words into *Kyaik-hti-yo*.

The situation of *Kyaik-hti-yo* is truly remarkable. The hill-top is open and grassy, with boulders strewn about, and splendid views on either side. The scene must be attractive during a festival, when men and women crowd up in bright sunshine in all their pretty silks. There are several sheds for the use of pilgrims, and a sign board, apparently in German, which reads—*Usingshoesandumbrellaarestrictlyprohibited*. I don't know what it means, but I suppose something or other is *Verboten*. Some one has laid down a tiled pavement which ends with railings and a precipice; and beyond

that is the famous pagoda—floating, as it were, in space.

On the edge of the cliff—in fact *over* the edge as it seems—is balanced a vast boulder, round like a football, and said to be 100 feet in circumference. It is entirely overlaid with gold-leaf, and the small golden pagoda of Kyaik-hti-yo rests upon it. The boulder is round underneath, and sits upon its pedestal as an egg sits on a table. In this incredible position it has stood poised over an abyss, I suppose for hundreds of thousands of years, and it is impossible to imagine what freakish law keeps it from plunging two thousand feet into the valleys below. The boulder is easily rocked by applying the shoulder to it. The extent of motion is clearly indicated by the bending and straightening of a bamboo stick wedged under it. I had personally disbelieved that a stone so great and so perilously situated could rock, and was seized with panic lest we should be responsible for over-setting it altogether.

Wonderful all this is ; and almost equally so the view that evening, when the wind tore away the mists, revealing on one side exquisite hill scenery washed with deep, rich colours ; and on the other more hills, banks of cloud, and wet blue plains stretching away till they met a sky as wet and as wonderful.

CHAPTER III.

THATON.

(*Map Square D. M.*)

THATON is inhabited by Karens, Burmese, Taungthus and Talaings, but of these Karens are a large majority. The railway from Pegu to Martaban runs through pretty country with wooded hills on one side, and rice fields spreading to the sea on the other. In the rains the paddy land is inundated, and the people seem to live in boats. Many of the houses, and the tiny *Nat* shrines belonging to them, are built up out of the water. At one station as we passed, an over-loaded boat sank, leaving the women in it shouting with laughter, and submerged to their chins. The bright colouring of the crowds as they streamed away from the train was reflected in the flood. All this, seen in the warm glow of evening sunshine, was extremely attractive.

The rain in Lower Burma during the monsoon is truly wonderful. July and August are the worst months, sometimes the one, sometimes the other being the wettest. The heaviest rainfall for Thaton during the last seven years occurred in 1913. The total fall was 257 inches, of which 153 inches fell in July and August. In 1919, when I was recruiting in Moulmein,

14·28 inches fell in a single day ! While touring in Thaton in July 1920 we saw only one gleam of sunshine during the month, and the fall for July alone was 69 inches. It is warm, steady, day-and-night rain, with frequent ' smothers ' for the delight of amphibious frogs, buffaloes and rice-cultivators. Nevertheless there is a softness of tone in the grey light, for a time at least infinitely restful. The climate is cool. The forests are rich and dripping. Mists enshroud the hills : and pale-green rice stands in nurseries in the wet paddy fields. No one in Lower Burma takes the slightest notice of a rain-storm more or less. The people protect themselves under vast bamboo hats : and the children keep their clothes dry by leaving them at home. Few children are more delightful than the babies of Burma—charming Burmese, Karen and Talaing frogs, in nothing but a hat and their own tight, yellow-brown skins : so fat, fair, round, and wholly lovable.

Chubby babies, grubby babies,
Moon-faced babies, deep in play :
Laughing babies, solemn babies,
Maung San Kwa and *Maung San Pe*.

Hatted babies, happy babies,
Naked ' neath a rain-swept sky.
Shy-struck babies, thumb-sucked babies,
When the *Thekin* passes by.

* * * *

A few stations beyond Thaton there is a delightful village called Zingyaik remarkable for its waterfalls, and for a pagoda perched high on a pinnacle of the hills

where, at this season, it is only visible when the clouds are torn momentarily apart. For a few fleeting seconds the Zingyaik Pagoda appears high over head, borne on the hurrying mists.

Of the waterfalls one is high and the other broad. Both are imposing as they come leaping over smooth slopes of rock. The stately forests, through which rain-mists drift from the higher hills, stand back here from naked faces of darkly-weathered granite. The broader fall, probably at its maximum after ten days heavy rain when I visited it in July (1920), pours over a cliff in three cascades. The waters break into foam as they fall, and then slip like festoons of lace down steep surfaces of rock, one hundred feet into the stream below. There is something very impressive in this out-pouring of white waters over the brown rock. Their roar pervades the whole village. Where the torrent gathers for its leap at the head of the falls, there is a boulder in mid-stream, with a white pagoda upon it.

The path to the Zingyaik Pagoda climbs close beside the taller fall, of whose distracted waters a near view is obtained as we come abreast of them at an angle of the road. Our guide was Maung Mya, the delightful young Talaing *Thugyi*¹ of Zingyaik; and later on, when we rested in a shed, several Talaing wood-cutters joined us—handsome lads, naked and all wet with rain, their powerful limbs and cheery faces very pleasant to look

¹ Headman.

upon. Long flights of rough granite steps lead on up the hill. The waterfalls, the mist laden hills, the granite steps, and the yellow people with their paper umbrellas are altogether strongly reminiscent of Japan—say of some charming rural suburb of old Kyoto.

The Zingyaik Pagoda is mythically ascribed to King Thirima Thawka (Asoka), and is said to have been repaired by the ill-fated Manuha in the eleventh century. An old legend has grown up about the place to the effect that a *Nāga*, or fabulous demon, laid an egg on the hill. As in the story of Kyaik-hti-yo, a fair maiden was born from the egg, and was brought up by the old *Rishi* of the hill. The King of Thaton married this girl, had two sons by her, but put her away when he discovered her *Nāga* origin. She returned to her *Rishi*, but her two sons went off to newly emerged land now called Pegu, and there buried a store of peas. Burmese and others claimed the land, but the Talaing brothers proved their prior claim by digging up their caché of peas. Hence the name *Pāgo* (or Pegu), derived from *Pe-ko-din*—nine baskets of peas. Such is the myth of Zingyaik Pagoda. Several legends in Burma refer to the laying of eggs. Captain Forbes points out that they are all of 'Mon-Anam' origin, and suggests the *Nāga* in such stories represents the aborigines, while the person who weds the being hatched from the egg signifies Mon invaders—be they Wa, Palaung, or (as in this case) Talaing.

The last part of the climb is cleverly arranged to avoid dizziness. An iron rail is put up where the steps

are particularly steep. The pagoda itself occupies the extreme summit of the peak, and from the low walls of its court we looked down on all sides into an abyss of clouds. How far the hills fall away I cannot say : but from below, even in the glimpses I had of it, it was evident that the pagoda crowns a pinnacle. It is a massive structure. There are three bells in the court, of which one is large and very sweet in tone. The little corrugated rest-house with iron posts cost the villagers fifteen hundred rupees. The fact when mentioned by my Talaing companions reminded me that this shrine with all its accessories did not come to the mountain-top by itself. The expense must have been considerable. Then I remembered all those granite steps. This is the fruit of centuries of affectionate labour.

In the little rest-shed we found a shop-keeper from Kyaikto spending a week of fasting and meditation up there. What a wonderful custom : and how excellent if we adopted it. A week of quiet reflection, introspection, and plain food once a day before noon, would, I am sure, enlighten us upon many subjects that really matter, and for which we have no time amidst our worldly preoccupations.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TALAINGS.

(See *Map Squares D.M. and E.M.*)

THE history of Lower Burma is largely the history of three races—Burmese, Pyu and Talaing. At the end of the 18th century the splendour of the Talaing court at Pegu astonished European travellers. To-day the Talaing have almost disappeared! In Amherst and Moulmein, a fugitive remnant of a great nation lingers, and there alone their language is spoken. In Thaton, Pegu and Rangoon their speech is almost dead and the people (though they actually survive in large numbers) have been absorbed into the Burmese population with that obliterating swiftness of which Burma affords so many examples.

The story of the Talaings is obscure. They are undoubtedly an extremely ancient race, who once lived in some undefined part of South-West China, south of the Shans of Nan-chao, by whom they were pushed down into Burma and Cambodia, just as later the Shans themselves were pushed by the Mongolo-Chinese of Kublai Khan. According to Duroiselle¹ their archaic name was *Rmen*, changed in mediæval times to *Rman*,

¹ Report, Archæological Survey. March, 1920. Para. 36.

and later to *Mon*. From this word, no doubt, is derived the ancient territorial name of Ramanya. The Talaing speak of themselves now as *Mon*, and they belong to the Mon-Khmer group (Talaing, Wa, Palaung, Palé, and Annamite) whose descent on Burma was the first of a series of waves of immigration whereby Burma was populated by its present Mongolian races. The main line of the Mon-Khmer immigration was down the Mekong Valley, whence the invasion spread laterally, and thinly over-ran Burma¹. Later, at the beginning of our era, the wave of Tibeto-Burman races moving down the Irrawaddy Valley drove the scattered Mon-Khmers south till they consolidated in force round Prome, and there began a conflict between the ancestors of Talaings and Burmese which continued to deluge the country in blood up to our own day. The first stroke was to the Talaings, who drove the Pyu (Tibeto-Burmans) north. So far our story is legendary, but at this point the incidents become historical. The Tibeto-Burman tribes consolidated at Pāgan, and during the 9th and 11th centuries amalgamated into the nation now called Burmese. Pegu was a Talaing capital from 573 to 781 A.D. : but in 1057 the Government was located at Thaton.

* * * * *

Thaton is one of the gates—not the only one—through which, at a very early date, and before the dawn of authentic history, Burma received her literature,

¹ Census Report, 1911. Vol. IX, Part I, Page 251.

architecture, and pure Southern Buddhism. Thaton, now 20 miles from the sea, was then a part of a country known as Ramanya. Ramanya included Thaton, Hanthawaddy, Muttama (Martaban), and Kuthein (the modern Pathein, or Bassein). It is popularly believed that Asoka sent the missionaries Sona and Uttara to Thaton in B.C. 306 to establish Buddhism. There is, however, no proof at all that Buddhism was introduced so early, or until the beginning of our era. The acceptance of this myth by authoritative writers illustrates the danger of trusting even the best authors without criticism. On this subject it is extremely difficult to judge what may or may not be accepted. The mission to Burma or Suvannabhumi (which term by the way embraces the whole coast from Hanoi and Malay to Bassein) is indeed mentioned in *Mahavansa*, the Singhalese Chronicle,¹ in about 500 A.D., and on that venerable authority accepted by men like Bigandet and Forchhammer. But the Singhalese of those days could not read Asoka's edicts: and those edicts, so precise and exact in detail, are now found to contain no reference whatever to the supposed mission to Burma. It is even doubtful whether there were two missionaries Sona and Uttara, or only one Sona-uttara. We may however accept the fact that the missionary or missionaries came at some early period, and probably from Ceylon, but not till long after Asoka's time.

¹ Chapter XII.

Southern Buddhism is supposed to have been introduced orally, the written text being secured from Ceylon in 400 A.D. by Buddhagosa. But even Buddhagosa is now exploded. In any case the Lopburi inscriptions show that Talaings wrote, and used Pali and Sanskrit words, in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. : and it is established beyond doubt that their script was derived from the Vengi or Palava of southern India. The Cambodians received letters from the same source. Burmese, as we shall see later, was not written until after Anawratta's conquest of Thaton in 1057.

* * * * *

In the beginning of our era the Talaings were faced with another problem when adventurous and aggressive colonists swarmed across the Bay from southern India and established settlements all along the coast, notably at Bassein, Rangoon and Thaton. Their importance cannot be exaggerated, since they profoundly influenced both Talaings and Pyu, and through them, at a later date, the Burmese. These Indian colonies no doubt were the vehicle of law, letters, religion and architecture to Burma. Forchhammer says¹ :—"Talaing letters, and the architectural style of their religious buildings, are of south Indian origin ; and their old records evince an intimate acquaintance with the Buddhist literature of Eastern Dekkan up to the 10th century."

¹ *Jardine Essay*. Page 27.

At the same time, though the Indians of those days dispensed unintentional blessings upon the peoples of Burma, they were a serious menace. Hinduism triumphed over Buddhism in Cambodia, though the Talaings successfully resisted this influence. There resulted also considerable mixing of blood, and some confusion as to the true origin of the Talaings: and there still survive all sorts of conflicting legends which obscure their real Mongolian origin. *Mon* is the true national name, and *Talaing* is merely a foreign appellation referring to the Indian strain which, by long association, has entered into their composition. *Talaing* is derived from *Talینگana*, a country still shown on Burmese maps of India to the south of the river Godavari¹.

It was very likely the growth and aggression of Indian Colonies that induced Anawratta's descent on Lower Burma in 1057 A.D. He 'drove the *Kalas* into the sea': and the smashing of the Pyu at Prome, and of the Talaing at Thaton may have been incidental. Before Anawratta's campaign the neighbouring kingdom of Cambodia, itself largely Hinduised, had probably spread its influence to the Talaing country for a long period. Forchhammer points out² that these events are sufficient to account for the blank of five centuries (6th to 11th) in the political history of the Talaings: and in the 11th century they only emerge in order to receive another crushing blow in 1057 A.D.

¹ See also Phayre's *History of Burma*. Page 28.

² *Jardine Essay*. Page 25.

The raid of Anawratta, King of Pāgan, on Thaton, is so well known that we need not dwell on it, nor repeat here the pathetic captivity of King Manuha, nor describe in detail how the Burmese carried off Talaing priests, savants, architects, and 30 elephant loads of manuscripts. The result of these incidents was the immediate and amazing growth of Burmese civilization under Talaing guidance, which made Pāgan in two centuries one of the wonders of the World. History contains few better examples of the intellectual triumph of a vanquished people over their conquerors. Talaing influence from Thaton upon the moulding of Burmese civilization at Pāgan was clearly tremendous—but we must not overlook the part played by the Pyu at Prome who had developed a culture and a writing of their own, deriving them also from southern India.

* * * * *

The Talaings, though utterly smashed at Thaton, made a fairly rapid recovery. They had lived hitherto in adversity. Their greatness was still before them. In 1281 A.D. a petty Talaing State arose at Martaban under an adventurer called Wagaru. He formed an alliance with the Burmese rebel governor of Pegu. Between them they beat the Pāgan army. Then Wagaru turned on his ally, rent *him*, established himself at Pegu, and restored the whole Talaing country (less Bassein) to independence. Wagaru has become celebrated for the *Wagaru Dhammathat*, the oldest Law book in Burma (13th century).

The Talaings were now a powerful nation (with disastrous intervals) from the 13th to the 18th centuries. Their capital was once more at Pegu, and they are often referred to as 'Peguans' by early European writers. To them we owe many of the finest monuments in Lower Burma, particularly at Rangoon, Pegu and Thaton. These Talaings were now once again serious, and often successful, rivals of the Burmese. Under Yazadayit (1385—1423) they invaded Ava. The name of Tabin Shweti stands out in history as that of a great soldier-king. His equally famous successor Bureng Naung was the magnificent prince known to Portuguese writers as Branginoko. He united during his reign Talaings and Burmese under one rule, took Ava in 1551, and in 1556 even overran the Shan States of Momeik, Hsipaw and Mogaung¹. Turning his attention then to Siam, he took Ayuthia in 1564, and captured the Siamese King. After a period of disorder the Talaings in 1752 A.D., under Byinnya Dala, once more invaded Upper Burma, captured Ava, and carried off the Burmese King. It was in fact this invasion that brought Alaungpra to the fore as a Burmese national leader.

The collapse of the Talaings and the final rise of the Burmese is one of the dramatic episodes in the history of this country. The early French and English settlements at Syriam and Negrais were dragged into this last contest with disastrous consequences to themselves.

¹ Report, Archæological Survey : March 1917. Para. 38 VI.

When the Talaings took Ava in 1752, Alaungpra was a petty village official of Shwebo, then [known as Moksobo. In that capacity he was confirmed by the invaders. When Byinnya Dala returned to Pegu, Alaungpra destroyed the Talaing garrison of Shwebo, and defeated the punitive force sent to chastise him. Thereafter, he gathered a force which was sufficiently menacing to induce the Talaing Governor to vacate Ava. Alaungpra occupied Ava, but himself returned to Shwebo to complete his preparations. In January 1754 the Talaing Army arrived to restore order. Finding Ava strongly occupied, they passed on up to Kyauk Myaung, the river port of Shwebo, and were there severely defeated in a river battle. Alaungpra pursued them to Hsinbyu Gyun, but returned resolutely to Shwebo to consolidate his position. He was now master of Upper Burma, but required to crush the people of Manipur.

Encouraged by these events the Burmese of Lower Burma revolted, but were driven into the fort of Prome where Alaungpra came to their relief in the end of 1754, and won another river battle. In February 1755 he occupied Bassein. The Talaing King fled to his capital at Pegu, but considerable creek fighting continued in the Delta. The situation of the French and English settlers at Syriam and Negrais was highly perplexing. Unable to foresee what was going to happen, and at bitter rivalry between themselves, they both came to utter grief through vacillation. In the meanwhile

Alaungpra occupied Dagon, and renamed it Yan-gon (Rangoon)—*Victory Achieved*. Here the Talaings attacked twice, the French helping them. In the first action the English ships remained neutral; but in the second, after negotiating with both sides to the last moment, they fired on the Burmese, apparently in flat contradiction to instructions from the resident at Negrais. The situation of those in charge was no doubt extremely difficult, but their conduct is not edifying. However, a well-timed fire-raft swept them all ignominiously from the scene of battle. It seems then that there was at least some justification for the dreadful retribution subsequently inflicted by Alaungpra. The Burmese King himself at this time had been recalled to Shwebo, but on his return resumed the offensive. He turned first on the French at Syriam where, a ship having stranded at high tide, he destroyed her, and seized the settlement. A French relief boat from India arrived two days later, and, unaware of the turn of events, was captured. Her papers showed that her supplies were for the Talaings, and Alaungpra was so exasperated that all the Frenchmen in his hands were immediately executed. Some months later the British half abandoned Negrais. The remnant left in charge of the factory were treacherously taken, and murdered almost to a man. This incident was proved later to have been instigated by Portuguese interpreters.

From Syriam Alaungpra made a forced march on Pegu which he reached in four days, and opened the siege

in January 1757. The age-long conflict was now drawing to its end. Four months later Byinnya Dala capitulated. Alaungpra's success was now complete. Before he died near Martaban in 1760 he had utterly destroyed the Talaings. He and his successors suppressed the Talaing language, and in a comparatively short time the Talaings have ceased to exist as a separate people in Pegu and the Delta. The story of that destruction, of the suppression of subsequent risings in the reigns of Alaungpra's two successors, and of the needless execution of the unfortunate Talaing King after 20 years of imprisonment in 1773, is touchingly described by Major Symes on pages 83 and 85 of his *Embassy to Ava*¹.

In 1814 thirty thousand harassed Talaings emigrated to Siam. In 1826 sixteen thousand were carried off as slaves by Shans. Throughout the First Burmese War the Talaings steadily refused all offers of European alliance. They were not frankly pro-British like the Karens, and thereby lost their last chance of independence.² The work of destruction continued after we had retired from Pegu at the conclusion of the First Burmese War. However Tenasserim became British territory in 1827, and there these unhappy people at last found refuge. The bulk of the population in Amherst is still Talaing, and there alone Talaing

¹ This book written in 1800 gives an excellent account of the early reigns of Alaungpra's dynasty.

² Snodgrass : *The Burmese War*. Pages 17, 83, 84, and 87.

nationality and language are preserved to any appreciable extent.

Of the 80,000 Talaings now found in Thaton, only 34,000 speak their own language.

There appear to be four groups of Talaings, each with language peculiarities of their own. The *Mon Dung* are found in Rangoon, Dala, Bassein, and Pegu. The *Mon Deik* occur in Amherst, south of the Salween. The *Mon Nya* live between the Sittang and Salween Rivers: and the *Mon Duk*, who are now mixed up with Karens, live at Paan, and east of the Kalamadaung Hills.

Talaings, as such, rarely enlist in our army: but numbers of them are recruited in Lower Burma under the name of Burmese. Many of the leading members of Burmese Society in Rangoon are really Talaings.

A well-known Talaing, U Shwe Le, non-official member of the Legislative Council, speaks as follows of his countrymen:—

“ Numerically we are inferior to the Burmese; and I notice with deep regret and concern that the Mon are slowly dying out. Their language is becoming obsolete and their literature is neglected. In such circumstances the question, of course, arises as to when Mons are likely to become extinct. Personally, I don't think that extinction can be postponed very long. Shans, Karens, Kachins and other indigenous races of Burma have more vitality and preserve their individuality; but the Talaings, I regret to say, are becoming

merged in the mass of the Burmese, and the race name is now Talaing-Myanma (Talaing-Burman). My people are very simple ; and like all simple races they abound in the domestic virtues. If you understand them you will find them the best of good-fellows, eager to please and generous to a fault."

We can easily understand the regret a Talaing must feel at the obliteration of his race. Their absorption, however, into a strong, virile nation like the Burmese will be as beneficial in the end as the fusion of Briton and Norman was in our own history. The comparison is not without interest. In the case of Norman and Briton it was the conquered race that benefited most in the educational sense. But with Burmese and Talaings, it was the subjugated who triumphed morally. And if Talaing literature is decaying, at least it has been the basis of Burmese literature, though, as I have shown, it is possible that both the Burmese and Talaing alphabets are deeply influenced by that of the Pyu, who also based theirs on some south Indian script. The Burmese in 1057 A.D. received their southern Buddhism from Thaton. Talaing architects and artists produced the wonderful Pagodas at Pāgan, where extensive Talaing Inscriptions (notably on 400 plaques in the Ananda Pagoda, on the bell in the Swezigon Pagoda, and on the face of the Myazedi Pillar) have, in recent years, greatly helped to illucidate the early history of Burma. For these reasons Talaing, though moribund, is regarded by

scholars as one of the important languages in Indo-China. It is also one of the oldest. The Talaings, like the Pyu before them, are not now being violently destroyed. They are merely undergoing that process of amalgamation so wide-spread in Burma. United, the Burmese, Talaings and other Mongolian races stand together stronger; and apart from personal sentiment, one cannot but recognize that the racial and linguistic differences amongst the indigenous people of Burma is a cause of weakness, not of strength.

CHAPTER V.

THE KARENS.

(See *Map Squares D.L. : C.M. : and D.M.*)

KARENS are found scattered throughout the Delta; Pegu and Tenasserim. They occur in Siam. They also occupy the hills of eastern Burma from Leiktho, Karen-ni and the Shan States in the north, right down to Tavoy and Mergui in the south.

Their situation is altogether peculiar. They are by no means a war-like race, and are indeed remarkable for a certain shyness. In Burmese times they were heavily taxed, but were never called upon for military service. To-day they have won a share in the Burmese units, but not as extensively as was hoped. In 1920 they lost a unique opportunity of capturing half the Burmese regiments for their own. The hill-people are still too reserved to recruit freely, and the race has never produced leaders except of the Pastor type. It is difficult even now to find N. C. Os.

These traits are hereditary, and are noticeable in their first immigration from Central Asia whence they entered Burma (probably in the neighbourhood of Karen-ni) and spread into territories now occupied, unobtrusively, and with the least possible contact with

the other migrating nations. Aloofness and reserve are marked characteristics. They now number about 1,102,000, as compared with roughly 8,000,000 Burmese. Their former condition was deplorable, and, but for the advent of the British, they would probably have disappeared like the Talaings. As it is, they are now a greatly flourishing race, passionately loyal to the British Government.

In the Census Report for 1911, Karens are shown as belonging to the Tai-Chinese group. This classification is now generally accepted. They are considered both by Mr. Taw Sein Ko and Monsieur Duriosselle to be of Chinese origin. Their present situation in Burma, and their own traditions, support the theory. Duroiselle believes they should be classed linguistically with Chinese and Shans (Tai). They are of course closely related to the Taungthu, and themselves claim kinship with the Lahu (Muhso). Taw Sein Ko in his report argues their connection with the Miao¹. He places their early home in Kansu in Northern China, "Whence," he says, "in their southward advance, they crossed the Desert of Gobi, which their tribal traditions quaintly call the *River of Sand*."² Duroiselle says, "The Karens are supposed to be Chinese tribes driven southward by the pressure of the Tai (Shans)."

¹ Report : Archæological Survey : March 1917. Paras. 51 & 52.

² It is interesting to note that the Kachin legend refers to a *Zaibru Chet*, or Sandy Pass. See *A Burmese* ARCADY. Chapter VI.

This new thesis, ascribing a Chinese origin to the Karens, is the most convincing yet offered, and is bound to be extremely gratifying to the Karens themselves, who would prefer to be almost anything rather than Tibeto-Burmans.

There are several kinds of Karens—the two most important divisions being the Pwo and Sgaw. Pwo Karens are sometimes called Talaing-Karens, since they have settled further south and mixed with the now disappearing Talaings, from whom it is said they received Buddhism. The Karens have been the Missionaries' one great success in Burma. Indeed, if they have two faults, they are too much Christianity, and too little Humour. It seems that early Missionaries found amongst Karen traditions traces of what appeared to be Christianity, and which they believed to be of Nestorian origin. However that may be, the Sgaw Karens especially, have adopted Christianity extensively. Owing to Missionary activities, Karens, though by nature less intelligent, are often better educated than Burmese, and they have been taught to co-operate and to cultivate their racial individuality. In this they need little encouragement. Indeed, it would be better if they associated more freely with Burmans. Their outside affections, however, are reserved entirely for the British. They have no delusions about home rule. The more anti-British the Burmese become, the more passionately loyal are the Karens.

Karens are sometimes classified as Plain Karens and Hill Karens. The Plain Karens are a highly civilized people, intelligent, and well educated. It is sometimes stated that Hill Karens make the best soldiers. I very much doubt it. They are extremely reserved and suspicious, and are not naturally courageous, though their courage can be cultivated. These wild Karens run from strangers, especially from Burmans, for whom they retain the old hereditary fear. Obviously it will be a long time before we can do extensive recruiting with men of this type, especially when, as is often the case, the local Civil Officials are mostly Burmese. Hill Karens purposely locate their villages in deep jungle, and as far as possible from roads and rivers. They often move away if roads are made near them, so determined is their isolation. Village sites are frequently shifted after consulting the *Nats* by means of chicken bones. The Hill Karens of the Dawna Hills and Taungyin River, that is on the Siamese border of Thaton and Moulmein, are especially isolated. They hold practically no communication with the outside world, and usually settle their affairs and disputes amongst themselves. They are addicted to the *Nat* superstition, and though some are Buddhists and *Nat*-Worshippers combined, others are almost entirely *Nat*-Worshippers. On the other hand they are extremely hospitable. Strangers can, and do, enter the houses and help themselves to food without asking permission. The villagers are so honest that the rice is left in bins

out in the fields far away from the houses. These Karens are of splendid physique, tireless walkers, and keen sportsmen whenever they have guns.

Karens include Karen-ni (Red Karens), Karen-net (Black Karens), Karen-byu (White Karens), Bre, Yimbaw, Geikho, Shawkho, Mano, Sinsin, Zayein, Pădaung and Taungthu.

The Red Karens, of course, live in Karen-ni, south of the Shan States. Bre, Pădaung, Yimbaw and Zayein occupy Karen-ni and the hills of Leiktho and Thandaung (east of Taungoo). This tangle of hills is of great ethnological interest. Mopwa occur at Thandaung : Geikho at Kosaplo : Pădaung and Yimbaw at Yado : and Bre and Shawkho on the Taungoo-Karen-ni border. The name Shawkho, or Sokho, is said to mean 'People living above the Rocks.' As a whole, these hill Karens are suspicious, morose and gloomy. There are many missions in the Leiktho Hills, and wherever the people are Christian they are fierce observers of the Sabbath, so that it is impossible to travel amongst them on Sunday.

The Pădaungs, of course, are the people whose women by wearing high metal collars have developed long necks, and thus successfully deformed themselves. The men are sturdy, industrious and cheery, and impress one most favourably. Three lads I once met on the Leiktho road stopped me, shook hands, and passed on without speaking. It was a curious incident, and very taking.

The languages of the various Karen tribes vary considerably. Sgaw is the most widely spoken. The Taungthu language is allied to Pwo. Bre and Paku appear to be branches of Sgaw. The Sgaw are most numerous in Bassein. Sgaw and Pwo are Burmese terms. Sgaw Karens call themselves *Pa-ka-nyaw* : while Pwo Karens call themselves *Ha-fa-lon*. According to Ba Te of the A. B. M., the word Karen is derived from the Chinese *Ch'iang* or *K'iang*.

TAUNGTHU.

Taungthus are less obviously Karen, and seem to have little in common with other divisions of that race. Their classification as Karens is, however, probably correct. They call themselves *Pa-O* a corruption of the Karen *Pwo* : and their language is said to be allied to Pwo. Their home in the Southern Shan States is called Hsa-htung after Thaton.

There were once Taungthu Kings at Thaton, of whom Thit Tabaung Mingyi is still spoken of. After the fall of the dynasty, the people appear to have been widely dispersed and their numbers were no doubt reduced, though there are still 46,000 Taungthus in the Thaton District. The present distribution of the Taungthus is curious. They are found as far north as Taunggyi in the Shan States ; and there are colonies at Toungoo, Pegu, Thaton (their original home), Paan, Naunglon, Tilon, and even as far south as Kawkaik in

Moulmein.¹ They are probably most numerous round Paan on the Salween, where there are at least 21 Taungthu villages. There is considerable coming and going between these widely separated settlements. The northern Taungthus, now found in the Shan States, are hardy plateau-men. They wear Shan dress and speak Shan, and are known as Shan-Taungthus, though they call themselves Thaton Pan Yin. They are said to have migrated to Hsa-htung in 1781 A.D., and there occupy the plateau land just like Shans all over Loilem, Mong Nai, Nam Hkok, Yawngghwe and Myelat. The Hsa-htung *Myoza* is a Taungthu, and the population is almost exclusively of that race. Their women, who are quite remarkably pretty, retain their national costume—a black, sack-like coat, black turban, and silver ornaments. The tribal divisions there given are Nang Hke, Ta Tok, Kun Loang, Tan Sang and Hkai. But in Thaton the divisions given me were Nang Hke, Ta Tok, Hpai Mong, Li Tong and Pan Yin.

The Taungthus in Paan, and elsewhere south of the Salween, must have been British subjects for close on a hundred years. They are remarkable for their manliness and independence, and are not in the least reserved or unsociable like their Karen cousins. Yet, as far as I could ascertain, none have ever entered the Army, or even the local police. Their neglect is but another example of good material wasted in this country.

¹ Map Squares D.K. : D.L. : D.M.

In 1922 we made great efforts to recruit Taungthus in the Shan States. Everywhere they have a reputation for solidity. Dacoits, who are rather numerous in Paan, leave Taungthu villages strictly alone; and these facts confirm the impression the Taungthus give of being a hardy, independent race. Their manners are certainly attractive. They drink to a certain extent, but are not addicted to opium. They continue to appoint *Lubyo-gaungs*, or 'Captains of the young men' who, in fact, have rather too much authority, but might be useful recruiting agents. The Taungthus are Buddhists. They retain the *Nat* superstition to the same extent as do the Burmese, but much less so than Hill Karens. *Nat* worship is limited to household offerings.

The Taungthus, as already mentioned, call themselves *Pa-O*. "Taungthu" is simply their Burmese name, and means 'Southerners' because in Thaton they live to the south of the Burmans.

CHAPTER VI.

SALWEEN RIVER.

(*Map Square D.M.*)

THE pagodas of Moulmein, lit with stars of electric light, are first seen at dusk from Martaban across the waters of the Salween River. They occupy a long range of hills behind Moulmein. In the river below, a number of picturesque wooden ships lie off the town, and others are building on the shore.

The great shrine of Moulmein, the Kyaik Thanlan, is probably Kipling's 'Old Moulmein Pagoda.' The name means 'The pagoda of the overthrow of the Siamese.' According to tradition, a Shan and a Siamese army settled their quarrel here by a race in pagoda building. The Shans made theirs of paper and bamboo and so finished first, and by this ruse won the competition and the war. Hardly less naive than this legend is a real historical incident. After the First Burmese War, the Salween became the frontier between British and Burmese territories. A doubt then arose as to which arm of the river was the main channel. Considerable territory was in dispute. Eventually two cocoanuts were solemnly floated down the stream, and the frontier determined by their course.

The view from the heights above Moulmein is really wonderful. Three flooded rivers, the Salween, Gyaing and Ataran, spread over the country, which glistens with the overflow of many waters. Abrupt rocks rise sharp and lonely from the paddy plains, giving a distinctive character to the scenery.

The Gyaing and Ataran Rivers enter the Salween a little above Moulmein. Of the two, the Gyaing is the largest—a broad water-way flowing through forest and paddy land.¹ Its quiet beauty accentuates the ruggedness of those curious hills whose abrupt outlines are spread along the horizon. The river-side villages are inhabited by Talaings, light-hearted people who in October go out in boats to the festival of a little pagoda called the Dhamma That. This pagoda, like so many in the neighbourhood, stands on a sharp pinnacle of rock above the river.

There is a daily steamer service up the Gyaing River as far as Kyondo. This is the terminus of an important trade-route to Siam. Two dilapidated motors, each held together more or less successfully with string, run as far as Kawkareik.² Thence the road deteriorates. It crosses the Dawna hills, which are inhabited by sturdy Karens, to Mya-waddy on the Siamese border. The name Dawna means '*Hill of Kites*,' derived from the Talaing words *daw* hill, and *nan* kite. The Thaungyin River is here the frontier

¹ Map Square E.M.

² Map Square E.M.



Salween River.

SALWEEN RIVER.

between Burma and Siam. Its valley is little known except to a few traders and forest officers. It is said that the birds and animals of both Burma and Malay mingle there. There are remarkable caves at Kyauket: and lower down at Kāmau Kāla-hat the river flows through imposing gorges before passing in a succession of rapids to its junction with the Salween.

The Ataran River is even more beautiful than the Gyaing. It is a much narrower stream, and the banks are thickly wooded. Here, Karens appear to be more numerous than Talaings. Long ranges of limestone hills present new and extraordinary outlines at every bend. Their sharp peaks, precipices and over-leaning bastions add a strange and wild beauty to the otherwise quiet scenery. In one place you can pass in a boat right through the range by a tunnel. At this point these high ridges are only about 40 yards thick at their base! They are, no doubt, the wreck of some great geological strata. Not long ago they were probably beaten upon by the sea: but alluvial matter is fast deposited by the rivers, and now these hills are surrounded by green paddy fields. Here and there pagodas on pinnacles of rock rise high above the river against the white clouds. The Ataran flows for miles along the base of these weird ranges, eating into their lime-stone feet.

The same kind of scenery, but on a grander scale, occurs on the Salween where it passes through extraordinary hills whose bold outlines of cliff and peak

appear as if cut out with a knife. Sometimes lone pinnacles rise all by themselves from the paddy land. Sometimes queer ranges, half veiled by storms, are strung across the country. One unusually wild peak called Zwe-ga-bin dominates the landscape. Its precipices are almost appalling, and on the aerie summit is a pagoda, more bravely situated even than that of Zingyaik.

The Burmese name Zwe-ga-bin is probably derived from the Sgaw Karen name *Kwe-ka-baw*, or the Pwo Karen *Kwe-ka-ban*, which both mean ' *Mooring place of ships* '—yet another indication of rapid land formation in areas which not long ago were under the sea. In Thaton anchors are sometimes dug up far inland.

Through such peculiar scenery the irresistible Salween, now in July brim full, flows past Paan, passing swiftly by headlands and islands. At Paan the rest-house is finely situated on a promontory overlooking the river. The Salween is only navigable for ordinary ferry steamers for another 30 miles to Shwegun. Above that, I was told, the scenery becomes grander than ever, and even sinister where the Salween passes through deep gorges. At one point, near the junction of the Thaungyin River, it is only 30 yards broad! Tremendous whirlpools set up in the rains near Yinbaing. No boats are allowed to proceed above Meizeik on account of the dangerous character of the water below the appalling cataracts which have earned one place the name of Matha-Täga—the ' *Gate of Death*.' Timber



Yue-ga-biri
Paar

rafts entering these fatal waters are flung to bits. Here, at any rate, there is truth in the Burmese proverb—*Mein-ma Mi-ne, Yauk-chya Paung si*. So tremendous is the force of the current that even single logs are split in pieces. The treacherous nature of the Salween in this part may be argued from the fact that the bodies of tigers, and sometimes of elephants, are washed down.

The Paan Sub-division is supplied with 48 miles of excellent laterite roads to Naunglon, Hlaingbwe and Shwegun, which are served with about a dozen motors. There is little cart traffic, and the Burmese drivers are free to charge along at 40 miles an hour which is the only pace for which a Burman has any use.

The ten mile drive to Naunglon is through one of the finest landscapes in Lower Burma. The road winds through flood and cultivation, and skirts the bold cliffs of Zwe-ga-bin and other extraordinary hills, which give this neighbourhood a character of its own. The scenery would compare favourably with more famous beauty spots in many parts of the world.

Travelling, however, becomes troublesome the moment you leave the high road, and indeed would be almost impossible in the rains but for courteous officials who smooth away difficulties. I soon recognised this at Naunglon whence we had to proceed 7 miles across flooded country to recruit at the Karen village of Paingnyan. Luckily the Township Officer secured me a large, comfortable boat. In this we proceeded down a creek where the current helped us considerably, until

we turned out of it across what at this season is a shallow lake stretching to the very base of the hills. These hills present the usual bold lines, though their abruptness is somewhat softened by luxurious jungle growth. It would be tedious to mention the beauty of each new and striking aspect of the scenery, but the fantastic and abrupt shapes of the hills belong to each and all.

We reached Paing-nyan after dark, but the shallowness of the water prevented a near approach. We therefore slept in the boat, and next morning woke to find ourselves in a lake with the peaks of Zwe-ga-bin rising majestically behind the village. A small boat took us off. The village is practically a swamp, with its houses and paddy fields spreading out into the shallows. It may be all right as a residence for Karens dressed for it in rain-proof hats, and no boots to sit about in soaked: but for any one else the sopping nature of the country makes movement difficult. This is a Pwo Karen Christian village. The Christian community (American Baptist) is smaller than I supposed, and is in fact limited to 4 or 5 villages; but as Christian Karens are more enlightened than others, one naturally recruits where the people are most open to persuasion. We held a meeting in a fine wooden chapel. The proceeding began and ended with *God save the King*, and was varied at intervals with hymns sung as part songs, with vocal tenor accompaniments. The Karens are fond of singing and practise a great

deal. Their singing is more pleasing, more melodious, and more ambitious than that of many a village choir in England. They are the only Orientals who can sing hymns without looking foolish—and indeed one is quite carried away with the warm harmonies they introduce. The handsome lads and pretty girls are as pleasing to hear as they certainly are to look upon—and the fat, jolly children, whom I always encourage to attend recruit meetings all over the country, were in this case more than usually fascinating. As a social affair the meeting was a success. I could only hope that it would bear fruit later in the recruiting sense.

Hills so peculiar as those in this area might be expected to be as wonderful inside as they are outside: and this is actually the case. There are magnificent caves near Moulmein, at Shwegun, and at other places. The caves near Paing-nyan are more remote, and therefore less known, but I have rarely seen any so imposing. They traverse the whole width of the range. We found there a *Phoongyi*, who had taken up his residence at the entrance, and who took us a little way in. He said that further on there was water and a strong draught of air, and that in certain places obstacles had to be surmounted by ladders. I fancy it would be unsafe to penetrate far into caves so little known, though natives *have* passed from end to end. We only went far enough to allow my inquisitive companion Maung Mya about ten chances of committing suicide. After lighting torches we entered vast, lofty caverns

with uneven, slippery floors. Water dripped from the roof in many places, and I have never before seen such wonderful stalactites and stalagmites in all stages of development. Some had joined up forming pillars, or resembling trees and foliage. Others again seemed to pour from the roof like gigantic petrified cataracts, which indeed they were. Standing water tends to form deposits along its edges, creating thereby terraces of shallow water rising one above the other, and each contained by a wavy wall of rock about 6 inches high. This is a very peculiar formation.

According to legend, these caverns were the home of the Embryo Buddha in his incarnation as Saddan Hsin Min, the Elephant King; and the caves are known as *Saddan Hsin Min Ku*. The fable is well known in Burma, and relates that one day the Elephant King gave a flower to his wife *Sula-thu-patti*. There was a bee in the flower which stung her, and she cried fretfully to her lord "I'll score off you." In a future life she was reborn a princess, and desiring an ivory ornament she sent out a hunter who approached the Elephant King but was caught by him. Hearing what the hunter wanted, and by whom he was sent, the Elephant King tried to saw off the tip of his tusk. Failing in that, he sent the whole tusk, and the Princess, recognizing it as that of her lord in her elephant life, grieved to death when she recalled those pettish words 'I'll score off you' which she had used in a former existence. Needless to say many a stalactite in these caves suggests some part of

the legend—here the hunter's hat, there the saw, and so on. I had to discourage a full recital which only excited Maung Mya's dangerous zeal for exploration. It was altogether a memorable expedition, though I confess there is something raw and revolting about the bowels of the earth, as about the bowels of slaughtered animals. Nor was there any great temptation to penetrate far, since the great dim caverns at the entrance are sufficiently inspiring. Truly, they are superb : and the effect is heightened by a gold pagoda in the centre of the floor, and several Buddha images along the walls, or in natural niches in the roof. A good flight of brick steps leads up from the water-way outside : but so little are the wonders of this land heeded, that we had passed by, the first time, without realizing the stupendous nature of these caves. Now, on the return journey, we visited them, and as we were in fact homeless in a flooded land, and distressed by a perfect deluge of rain, we decided to spend the night comfortably in the cave in company with the *Phoongyi*. For such a purpose some one had built a brick platform under a dry expanse of roof. There were no bats, though I found that a Blue Burmese Whistling-Thrush haunted the place. As night fell, our tiny points of light only intensified the deep blackness of the cavern. A rush of distant cascades whispered through the dome. The process wrought through ages by drops of water, the stupendous lapses of time employed by Nature, presented themselves to the imagination with oppressive reality. Truly

our caravan but rested 'its hour or two.' These mountains, dispersed in broken fragments over the country, are after all the skeleton, the scattered bones, of what was once a mighty strata. Moment by moment through this night, disintegration continued, whose progress is not appreciable in one life or in ten. The single water-drop that fell on my face in the darkness, will fall again—when? In consideration of these matters, and because my Kachin Orderly Sau Yaw deemed the place distinctly a likely abode for *Nats*, we were careful to keep candles burning before the lonely pagoda until far into the night.

* * * *

From Paan we motored 24 miles through charming woodland scenery to Hlaingbwe township, holding meetings at the Karen village of Yebu 4 miles off the road, and at Tilon, a Taungthu village. Hlaingbwe derives its appropriate name 'Lake of the Rains' from the Talaing words *hlaing* a lake, and *bwe* rain. Here I passed into the friendly charge of the Township Officer Maung San Tun, a delightful young Arakanese, who gave me a great deal of information, particularly regarding the Karens in his charge. San Tun however was oppressed with fears lest his family should grow faster than his income, and we discussed every means by which incomes may be legitimately increased, or families curbed. I learned something in this of the temptations to which officials on small salaries are exposed, and the strength of character it requires to

keep clean in an atmosphere of corruption more insidious, more easy, than one would ever imagine. I was much impressed by San Tun. I hope Rangoon College often turns out clean, energetic lads of that type. I doubt however if the Provincial Service will keep them. We ourselves are plodders, ready enough to jog along for 30 years with a bare financial margin. The Burman is not like that. He asks—"Is it worth it"? and decides "No." We charge him with want of application, without appreciating that perhaps he is only showing a very proper spirit of ambition.

The caves five miles up the Salween above Shwegun are called We-byan after the hill in which they are located. The name, which means *Hovering Flight*, appears to be suggested by the overhanging precipices in the vicinity. These caves are distinctly attractive, and are the site of an important festival at *Tâgoo*. They are approached by steps, the floor is neatly paved, and the main cavern richly adorned by a host of Buddha images, some of which are beautiful. There are also frescoes and other signs of a former scheme of decoration which are believed to be two centuries old, and are ascribed to Shan-Talaings. The caves are said to reach far back into the hill, but even the main 'hall' at the entrance cannot compare with the splendid spaciousness of the less known caves of Saddan Hsin Min which I have already described.

Shwegun is an important timber depôt. Much teak is floated down the Salween. Some of it comes

from higher up in Karen-ni and has to pass through the cataracts where, it is said, the logs are sucked down as they enter the rapids, and do not rise again till shot out at the lower end. The body of an unfortunate timber agent, who was drowned some years ago above the rapids, was recovered somewhere near Shwegun. Shwegun is the terminus for ferry steamers. Private launches however go a good deal higher, and in fact the remote district of Papun, or Salween, is usually reached from this direction. As if the races and creeds of this bit of country were not already sufficiently confused, there must needs be a colony of Seventh Day Adventists about 15 miles above Shwegun.

At Pagat there is a small cave which is occupied by millions of bats. Three thousand rupees is paid yearly for the right to remove their droppings. I have seldom seen a more disgusting, festering hole. The stench is appalling. The floor is not only buried deep in manure, but is crawling with vermine and cockroaches. A tall ladder stands in the centre of the cave by means of which an upper chamber is reached. The issue of bats at dusk is an extraordinary sight. They roll forth like clouds of smoke for more than an hour.

We now returned over-land to Thaton, spending a night *en route* on Mr. Findlay's rubber estate at Duryin-zeik. The fine house with its teak fittings, polished floors, baths and electricity, and the gardens and immaculate lawns, are a revelation of the luxury that energy and foresight can provide even in a jungle.

CHAPTER VII.

TENASSERIM.

(*Map Squares E.N. and E.O.*)

SOUTH of Moulmein, Burmese territory dwindles to a long, thin strip of sea-coast, and shares with Siam the narrow peninsula which stretches away down towards the Malay States. Finally Burma ends in Victoria Point and all the beautiful islands of the Mergui Archipelago. Moulmein itself is only 40 miles wide in parts. Tavoy, at its widest, is only 60 miles across: and in places Mergui is but 10 or 15 miles wide, though its "townships" extend far out to sea to include the 80 islands of the Archipelago.

These three areas—Moulmein, Tavoy and Mergui¹ once had a geographical importance which they no longer possess. Moulmein, of course, was originally the capital of British Burma. For many centuries before that, Tenasserim (48 miles up the Tenasserim River), and its seaport of Mergui, were the western termini of a great trade route from China and Siam. The Tenasserim route, while avoiding the pirate perils of the Straits of Malacca, gave Siam safe and easy access to the Indian Ocean: and on account of their commercial importance Tenasserim and Mergui received a great deal

¹ Map Squares E.M. ; E.N. ; and E.O.

of attention from early merchants and adventurers. Indeed, Nicola de Conti, the first European to visit Mergui, arrived there at least fifty years before Vasco de Gama discovered the passage round the Cape of Good Hope in 1497.¹ Tenasserim is referred to as Tun-sun in Chinese records of the Liang dynasty (502-556 A.D.).

During most of its history, Mergui has been a province of Siam. The Burmese who now inhabit it are not indigenous to the soil, but are descended from Burmese armies which invaded and acquired the country in 1759 under Alaungpra, and in 1775 under Sinbyu Shin.² Those two invasions, and the unrest which followed them, did much to destroy the prosperity of these areas. The population was seriously reduced. Ayuthia³ on the Menam⁴ River, which was the Siamese capital for 400 years, and whose situation gave Tenasserim and Mergui their significance, was besieged by the Burmese in 1759, and finally destroyed in 1775. It was indeed a case of killing the goose of the golden egg. The capital of Siam was moved to Bangkok: and Tenasserim immediately dwindled from a great town to a miserable village of a hundred houses. The old road to Siam, though it can still be traced, is a ruin, and it is now hard to believe that sleepy, dull Tenasserim can ever have been a place of importance.

¹ Anderson's *English Intercourse with Siam*. Page 27.

² The Burmese also invaded Siam under Bayin Naung in 1564.

³ Map Square F. N.

⁴ The word *Menam* means "Mother of waters."

Moulmein, Tavoy and Mergui now form part of the Tenasserim Division of Burma. Together with Arakan, they were acquired by the British in 1826, after the First Burmese War. But though they have been a British possession for nearly a hundred years, they are perhaps the most backward areas in Burma, and are in fact more remote, inaccessible and undeveloped than even some of the newly acquired frontier districts of Upper Burma. The fact is that they have now entirely lost that geographical pre-eminence which once they enjoyed. Nothing can infuse life into them again unless the mineral wealth which undoubtedly they possess can be worked and developed profitably. Moulmein still has a large rice trade: but its export of timber has dwindled, and steamships visit it less and less every year. Moulmein ceased to be of importance after the Second Burmese War, since when Rangoon has slowly assumed its present magnificence.

Big ships cannot enter the Tavoy river, but small vessels ascend for a considerable distance. Tavoy is rich in tin and wolfram, which gave it a special significance during the war. In that crisis Government said "Let there be roads"—and there were roads: and Tavoy burst into renewed activity. In 1915 there were ten miles of road and two motor cars in the district. In 1920 there were sixty miles of road and quite two hundred cars. Small wolfram mines had to close down after the war when prices fell, but the larger wolfram companies and the tin mines are likely to survive and

prosper. It is also probable that vast cinchona plantations will be laid out on behalf of Government, and all these are reasons for hoping that Tavoy at least will not relapse again into insignificance.

MERGUI.

In Mergui, however, conditions are apparently hopeless. The district is rich in tin, wolfram, coal and rubber, but the country remains entirely undeveloped. There are probably not more than 20 miles of metalled road in the whole district.

The country, however, is exceedingly pretty. Mergui town lies at the mouth of the Tenasserim River where it enters the sea amongst several islands. From the bluff, upon which the Circuit House and other buildings are situated, there is a charming view over the town, the harbour, and the fishing boats. All day long a fresh breeze blows, and the sea changes colour from deep blue in the morning to tender green in the after-noon when the water is tinged with patches of yellow and purple : while dim shadowy islands of the distant Archipelago are strung along the horizon.

Nevertheless I should hesitate to call the harbour ideal. On re-embarking the waves were big enough to necessitate climbing over the steamer's stern. The sampan bounces at a dangling ladder, and falls away ; leaving you clutching in mid-air, with green seas at your heels, and at the mercy of the sampan-wallah who stands by to continue an argument about his fare.

The Mergui Archipelago is famous for its beauty. Most of the islands are wooded. They vary in size from big islands like King Island, to mere rocks rising abruptly from the sea. The Archipelago is the resort of a curious sea-folk called *Salôns*,¹ who live almost entirely on the water, and only set up temporary huts on the beach for short periods during the Monsoon. These people have achieved only a low standard of civilisation, and live mainly by fishing and hunting.

Burmese occupy the country round Mergui and Tenasserim. Karens are numerous round Pálaw in the north, and in the hills to the east. Elsewhere Siamese and Chinese occur. The population is, however, thin, and there are few villages. Houses, instead of being grouped together, are usually scattered about with wide intervals between them. The dialects of both Burmese and Karens in Mergui and Tavoy are hardly intelligible to other natives of Burma.

Tenasserim village is 48 miles up the Tenasserim River from Mergui. A stone pillar, and the remains of a moat, or ditch, still exist, but there are no other traces of former grandeur. The beauty of the Tenasserim River is enhanced by another river—the Little Tenasserim—which joins it at this point.

TAVOY.²

The Burmans of Tavoy are more or less limited to the valley of the Tavoy River, the hilly parts of the

¹ Map Squares E.O. and E.P.

² Map Square E.N.

district being thinly populated by Karens. Like the Burmese of Mergui, many Tavoyans have Siamese blood in them, and it is probable that numbers of Siamese return themselves as Burmans when a census is taken. The history of Tavoy, like that of Mergui, is one of disastrous struggles between Burma and Siam.

Tavoy is quite as beautiful as Mergui, and with its roads and motor cars far more accessible. One of the most delightful expeditions is to the Indo-Burma Tin Corporation's estate at Taung Thonlon,¹ which I was able to visit through the kind hospitality of Mr. Perry, the Manager. The early morning motor drive of 28 miles along the Siamese Road through bold and splendid forests already aflame with the blossom of the Silk Cotton Tree, and the rush back again to Tavoy in the evening when the quiet twilight adds a soft charm to the scenery, is by no means the least enjoyable part of the day.

The mine lies in a valley which was probably once a lake bed. The alluvial soil has been impregnated for centuries with tin washed down from the surrounding hills. In the dry season, at any rate, no site could appear less promising for dredgers than this parched valley. Yet this is the home of a huge dredger which floats in a pool no larger than a duck-pond. It sucks up soil in front and passes it out again behind, thus never enlarging the tank in which it works. And here, wonderful to relate, each in an insignificant puddle of its own, were being fitted together those two now

¹ Map Square N.E.

famous dredgers which, at Myitkyina in more ambitious but unprofitable days, rode the floods of the Upper Irrawaddy, and dredged its bed for gold. These two machines will always be associated with that Irrawaddy El Dorado, where they deserved better success, and where so long they waged a brave but hopeless fight. It is a surprising feat, and a wonderful instance of resource and enterprise, to have cut up these immense dredgers in uppermost Burma, and to have conveyed them hundreds of miles by rail, steamer, lorry and bullock-cart to a new field of activity amongst the remote hills of Tavoy.

Tavoy has an absolutely ideal seaside resort in a place called Maung Māgan.¹ It is really faultless. Maung Māgan is a wide bay with distant hills running out to sea on either hand, and with a few islands on the horizon of a brilliantly blue sea. The coast is fringed with a kind of tamarisk, amongst which a number of bungalows, for week-end use, face the sea. At high tide the waves wash close up to the verandah steps, inviting frequent baths. It is a place for shirt, shorts and bare feet, and for shameless abandonment to bathing and paddling, and the joy of hunting for pretty shells, which are soon discarded for prettier ones. I found no less than fifty different kinds of shells in an hour. They were mostly small ones; but enormous nautili, cowries and other shells are cast up by the great waves of the Monsoon, and can usually be bought from the villagers. The largest cowries are $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches

¹ Map Square D. N.

long. A fairly complete collection of 61 species consisted mostly of Molluscs including 31 *Gasteropoda* (snails, cowries, limpets, etc.), and 26 *Lamellibranchiata* (bivalves like cockles, mussels and oysters). Many of these Molluscs are very beautiful. I should be afraid to say how many shells and what treasures of sea wreck my Burmese and Kachins collected. This was the first time Ko Myit or Sau Nan had ever seen a sea beach, and it certainly added much to my own pleasure to watch theirs'. Incidentally there were fortunes lying on the sand. A large cowry is worth Rs. 5 in the Kachin Hills, or was, until a Kachin company, stationed in the Andamans for a few weeks in 1920, brought back a ship-load.

Presently the tide ebbs an incredible distance, exposing reefs of rock, and leaving bare those wonderful stretches of wet, firm sand which have made Maung Māgan famous. No sands could be more perfect, and never since my boyhood have I spent such wet, naked, hungry and utterly happy days. At night a full moon sheds her brilliance upon the waters. The incoming tide sings a soft lullaby along the shore. The day ends with a dish of pomfret, four oysters (alas only four !), and an appalling sunburn.

CHAPTER VIII.

ARAKAN.

(*Map Square B. K.*).

NOTHING could be more lazy and delightful than the short, sunny voyages from Rangoon to the various ports of Tenasserim and Arakan. In winter the seas are blue and calm, with hardly a ripple on their glassy surface. In the Monsoon they are said to be very much otherwise ; but, God willing, I am determined to forego the experience. I am content with only a memory of balmy breezes, flying-fish, and replete days, when the whole duty of man is to digest one heavy meal in time for the next.

Arakan is a long strip of sea-coast completely cut off from land communication with the rest of Burma by ranges of high hills called the Yomas. There are three possible passes across the Yomas, but at present the roads are not sufficiently good to encourage commerce between Arakan and the Irrawaddy Valley. On the other hand communications between Arakan and India are fairly good. Akyab reads Indian and not Burmese newspapers. It has four mails a week from Calcutta, and only one from Burma. Calcutta is more accessible than Rangoon, and will be very much more so in a few years when the Indian railway is extended from Chittagong (its present terminus) to Akyab.

Besides all this, the Arakanese, though apprehensive about the steady invasion of their country by hordes of Chittagonians, are still more resentful of their race-brothers the Burmese, who in 1784, in the reign of Bodaw Paya, annexed their territory, treated them with terrible harshness, and committed the unforgivable crime of removing to Mandalay the Mahamuni Buddha, an image round which the religious and political history of Arakan centered from remote ages. Nursing these old wrongs, the Arakanese have no desire to break down the political and geographical barriers which separate them from the rest of Burma. They are keen Buddhists, their origin is identical with that of the Burmese, and their language is not very different. But, like the Karens, they hold themselves aloof, brood over their injuries, and gladly accentuate their isolation. It is a curious attitude, though one may sympathize with, and understand it. But it is none the less unfortunate for the future of Arakan. The only scientific way of destroying these prejudices is by improving land communications with Burma, and thus encouraging trade and intercourse.

The Arakanese possess most of the characteristics of the Burmese without perhaps inheriting their peculiar charm. They are, however, even more intelligent, and most of the leading "Burmans" in Rangoon are really of Arakanese descent. One very remarkable result of Indian influence is the seclusion in which the Arakanese keep their women. The streets of Akyab

are empty of women, who are in fact "*purda*." Nothing strikes one so forcibly as this after Burma, where the Burmese woman, with all her charm of dress and manner, is so tremendously in evidence.

In the north-east portion of Akyab, in the Buthidaung Sub-division, the population now consists chiefly of permanent Chittagonian settlers. Large numbers of Chittagonians also spread over the country temporarily for the ploughing and reaping seasons. The Arakanese now tend to concentrate in the Sub-division of Kyauktaw.¹ Some people think they must necessarily be submerged in time. Others believe that they will hold their own. Fortunately they do not intermarry much with Chittagonians: and though rather an indolent race, have yet brains enough to be fairly prosperous, and in a few individual cases even rich.

Besides Arakanese, four other indigenous races occupy the hills, particularly in the Arakan Hill Tracts along the upper reaches of the Kāladan River. These are all quite wild hill people, namely, Chins, Daingnets, Taungthas (who are said to be descended from Talaing invaders) and Khamis. The Khamis have villages in the plains opposite Kyauktaw and elsewhere, but they are a timid, naked people, and the population fled from the only village I entered as soon as they saw me. Khami women wear only a very short skirt and a triangular bit of cloth over the left breast—the breast specially dedicated to the husband. The men wear

¹ Map Square B. K.

nothing but a quite inadequate waistband of very narrow cloth, and are said to regard nakedness as a sign of manhood. The ends of the loin-cloth hang down before and behind like tails, and for this reason the Arakanese have corrupted the name *Khami* into *Kwe-mi* (Dog's tail)

Arakan is divided into four areas—Sandoway, Kyaukpyu, Akyab and the Arakan Hill Tracts. There are certain wild districts near the Chin Hills which are still unadministered, though not likely to remain so. Four large rivers flow through Akyab—the Naaf, Māyu, Kāladan and Lemro: but the Akyab district is also completely intersected with waterways which are deep, navigable and tidal, and afford a perfect system of communications. The Arakan Flotilla Company runs an extensive service up these creeks, but trade, except in paddy, is not large. The climate of Arakan is equable. The average maximum temperature is 86°; and the minimum 74°. The average rainfall is 209 inches. The summer heat is tempered by sea breezes, and in winter Arakan, like Burma, enjoys unbroken brilliant sunshine.

Akyab¹ lies on the Kāladan River whose wide estuary makes a splendid harbour. The entrance is guarded on one side by reefs on which stands a lighthouse, and on the other by a promontory called the "Point" which is a favourite place for morning and evening walks. From an old tower on the "Point"

¹ Map Square B. K.

there are wide views of the harbour on one hand, and of sandy coast on the other, upon which the sea rolls in long white waves. The "Point" has a never-ending fascination, whether seen in morning sunshine, or at sunset, or at night when the harbour is flooded with moonlight.

The Kāladan River narrows a little higher up, and gives access to the network of inland waterways. One of these creeks, the Baw Myit, or "Silver River," leads to Myohaung, which is 45 miles from Akyab by launch. The scenery is pretty. The river banks are fringed with Dhanni palms which the villagers use for roofing their houses. On the horizon Be-nga-ya Daung ("Hills of 500 Ducks") and Aga Daung ("Sky Hill") are conspicuous landmarks. The golden spire of the Urrit Taung Pagoda is seen to advantage on the low hills of Poonagyun ("Brahmin's Island"), where, according to legend, the Buddha lived his existence as a Brahmin. Since the loss of the Mahamuni image, and the destruction of the once famous shrine of Mahati in the First Burmese War, Urrit Taung has become the most popular pagoda in Arakan. It was originally a simple *stupa*, and is claimed to be one of those shrines in which Asoka buried relics of the Buddha. But it was added to in the 16th century by King Min Pālaung. This king was, in fact, born on the island while his father was watching a battle between Arakanese and Portuguese ships in the river below. He took his name from these events—Min Pālaung ("King of Foreigners").

Myohaung is really worth visiting on account of its curious and even splendid pagodas. It was the capital of Arakan from 1430 to 1782 A.D. It lies in a low range of hills which form natural ramparts for the protection of the city. Only a few connecting bastions were necessary to perfect the fortifications. At least six ancient capitals of Arakan were built in various places along these hills. The custom of frequently changing the capital is common to Burma and Arakan, and is based on a belief that cities, like nations and individuals, retain their vitality for only a limited time. The elaborate ceremonials employed at each founding were meant to ensure a long and prosperous life for the city by all the arts of Astrology and *Yadaya*. *Yadaya* is the science of averting evil by mystic signs, and may, in fact, be described as the art of getting something for nothing. Nor is it entirely futile. For instance, if a cabalistic inscription was set up, as it was in Myohaung, to exorcise mosquitoes, and if the mosquitoes were exorcised (there is no evidence that they were) then *Yadaya* fulfilled its purpose. Or again, if the king built a pagoda on the north side of the city to ward off attacks from the north, and if on that account the enemy carefully refrained from attacking from the north, as they did refrain, then the monument as a work of *Yadaya* justifies its existence. In old days this science was carefully studied. Bells were often inscribed with mathematical figures arranged in squares. *Yadaya* was an important branch of

ancient strategy, only upset by the barbarous disregard of Europeans for precedent.

Myohaung ("Old City") is called by the Arakanese Mrauk U ("First Accomplishment"), because it is said that an invading army of Pyus was destroyed there in about 964 A.D., by an Arakanese prince called Pai Pyu. The prince offered himself as a guide to the enemy. He arranged for them to cross the Lemro River in small parties, and slew them secretly and in detail as soon as they landed on the far bank. There was subsequently a successful Pyu invasion under Let-ya-min-nan in 1118 A.D. On that occasion the Pyus damaged the back and right leg of the Mahamuni image, but were unable to remove it. There was an unsuccessful Burmese invasion in 1426. These early wars are now a matter of legend. There is no positive record of them in the inscriptions, except in the Buddha Gaya inscription referred to elsewhere. This is not, however, sufficient ground for discrediting the tradition of several invasions, because, apart from epigraphical inscriptions, no history of Burma was attempted until the 15th century. The *Hman Nan* itself is based on old records, but was only written in 1819 A.D.

In 1784 the Burmese conquered Arakan and administered it from Myohaung until British annexation. After the Burmese conquest of 1784, the Arakanese ceased to exist as a separate nation. But Arakan has had triumphs in its time. In the 15-16th century it included parts of Bassein and Chittagong. In fact

the Arakanese are said to have founded Chittagong. The king having been persuaded not to ravage the country, called the new city *Saik taik (ma) kaung* ("Not good to fight") from which is derived the modern name of Chittagong. Arakanese pirates were the terror of Indian coastal towns, where the Muls are said to be their descendants. Perhaps this accounts for the proverbial rapacity of Mug cooks!

But before the Burmese conquest of 1784 things had obviously gone very wrong in Arakan. The throne was actually auctioned by the palace guards for short-term reigns. A Chittagonian bombarded the palace, and forced the king to take refuge in the Shittaung Pagoda. King Bodaw Paya of Burma was, in fact, invited by Arakanese patriots to restore order. His army came, but unfortunately declined to withdraw. Thousands of Arakanese were massacred. Thousands more fled the country to India and Chittagong. Some returned after British annexation, but others never did, and there is no doubt but that the population was seriously reduced. Arakan was added to Burma, and—worst tragedy of all—the precious Mahamuni image was carried away.

But the acquisition of Arakan brought the Burmese into conflict with the British, and the First Burmese War resulted in 1824. There was an action at Mahati where the sacred shrine was destroyed by artillery fire. A second and final action, in the early stages of which the British were repulsed, took place at Myohaung.

The Burmese were defeated and ceased to resist, and the country was ceded to the British in 1826. Myohaung proved unhealthy (in spite of cabalistic inscriptions), and was given up in favour of Akyab by the sea. Akyab was then only a little fishing village. The Burmese name for it is Sit-twe, which means "War Base." The word Akyab is derived from a pagoda called Akyat-daw.¹

In our attack on Myohaung we were helped not only by the Arakanese who so hated the Burmese, but also by the *Nats*, one of whom, Mya-thwin, was formally married before the action to Robertson, the Civil Officer with the forces. Four great *Nats* preside over Arakan. They are Mya-thwin, Myauk U, Kyauk-seik and Wunti. Of these, the *Nat* Wunti once rendered great service to the country by causing the death of Bayin Naung, King of Pegu, who was preparing to invade Arakan.

The terraces and walls of the old Arakanese palace at Myohaung still exist, together with a subterranean passage which formerly gave secret access to the river. Until recently, the palace site was overgrown. It has now been cleared and is occupied by township buildings. Three rough and very ill-proportioned statues of King Pasa Min² still exist. In his reign Shah Suja was driven from Delhi by his brother Aurangzebe (1661 A.D.), and fled to Arakan where he was murdered. King Pasa

¹ Fytche. *Burma Past and Present*. Page 88.

² The full title of this King was *Sanda Thu Dhamma Raza*.

Min built five large pagodas at Myohaung, some of which have been repaired by the villagers.

The rich have lavished large fortunes on restoring the pagodas of Myohaung. The poor have subscribed all they can towards the preservation of their decaying monuments. Every man helps to cut away the jungle once a year from the favourite pagodas. Myohaung is second in archæological importance only to Pāgan. But owing to the isolated situation of the country, scientific archæological study and conservation have not yet been started. Duroiselle, who visited Myohaung a year after I did, was the first archæologist to enter Arakan since the days of Forchhammer. It is only poor villagers who have repaired a few of these wonderful shrines out of their small savings, and preserved history by recent inscriptions on stones and bells. Only private students like San Shwe Bu have attempted to unravel the details of Arakanese history. Many inscriptions have yet to be translated. Legends, which have grown up round the monuments, have to be examined. Coins, in which Arakan (unlike Burma) is rich, have to be collected and arranged. There is much excavation to be done, and of course the decay of many important buildings may be arrested by judicious conservation. This last is a work which should not be left to untrained hands. There are restorations more damaging than neglect.

San Shwe Bu, an Arakanese who has taken a deep interest in the history of his country, accompanied me

on my tour of exploration. My facts are largely supplied by him. Though doubtless faulty in minor details they are probably correct in the main essentials, since they are based on palm-leaf manuscripts of which San Shwe Bu has made an exhaustive study. What his historical research lacks in accuracy of detail is compensated by the genuine affection and sympathy with which he has treated his subject.

It is absolutely impossible here to mention more than three of the most curious pagodas of Myohaung—namely, the Andaw Thein, the Shittaung, and the Dûkhan Thein. But these must be described in some detail since they are traversed by peculiar galleries, or vaulted passages, and have no known prototype either in India or Burma. The pagodas of Myohaung have four peculiarities. Firstly, they are built of solid stone said to have been imported from Kyaukpyu. This at once distinguishes them from Burmese pagodas, which (with one or two exceptions) are all of brick. The stone is well dressed, and in some cases the blocks are fitted together with great accuracy. Such exterior ornament as exists, as well as all the intricate decorations of the interiors, are carved out of the stone, and not moulded in plaster as they are in Burma. Secondly, the Myohaung pagodas are fortresses, intended as places of refuge and defence. Thirdly, they are traversed by galleries. There are probably vaults under most of the pagodas. Such vaults were found under the That-cha Mānaung and other monuments during

repairs. The vaults are entered by passages whose exits are bricked up and hidden under the Buddha images seated on the altars of adjoining pavilions or *Kus*. Fourthly, Hindu influence is strongly marked in frescoes and carvings.

The Andaw Thein (16th century) is smaller than the others, but for beauty of design and delicacy of execution is second to none. The central chamber is supported in the middle by a massive pillar with niches in which Buddhas are seated back to back. The rich mural carvings include figures of the Garuda, Siva's trident, and Ganesh, the Elephant-headed Godling of the Hindus. Nevertheless, the pagoda is essentially Buddhist, and, as its name "Hall of the Royal Tooth" implies, it enshrined a tooth of Buddha of one or other of his many existences. An ugly hole in the central pillar betrays the ruthless vandalism of treasure-hunters. In this instance the relic was recovered, though stripped of its gold casing. It is now kept in a local monastery. Almost every shrine has been similarly desecrated. On one occasion a treasure-hunter was squashed to death by the caving in of the stone-work in the hole he had made. Next day only his legs were seen sticking out of the tunnel. Unfortunately this kind of justice does not always overtake such vandals.

The beautiful arched roof of the Andaw Thein is all of solid stone. There is an outer passage running round the central chamber, but it has fallen

in places. The builders of these stone structures, though obviously highly skilled, yet misunderstood the value of a key stone. The key stones, instead of being massive, are usually quite thin, so that they easily slip out of position, thus involving the ruin of the whole building. This is noticeable everywhere, particularly in the Andaw Thein, and in a stone "Ordination Hall" attached to the Rättána Mānaung.

The Shittaung, or "Shrine of Eighty-thousand Buddhas," is a much larger monument. It was built in the 16th century by King Min Ba to commemorate his victory over the Portuguese. This is a fortress-pagoda, intended as a refuge for the King and Court in times of trouble. Its massive walls must have made it absolutely impregnable. Two passages, an inner and an outer, run round the inside of the building, and within these again is a central shrine, or chamber. The walls of the outer passage are elaborately carved with animal figures such as birds, deer, lions, elephants and rhinoceroses. A number of mythical animals are also represented, and include the *Nāga*, *Belu*, *Gāruda*, *Makara*, *Ke-nāya* and *Mānothi-ha pin-hnit-kwa*. The inner passage is lined with seated Buddhas, whole rows of which are headless, while other rows are intact, suggesting that iconoclasts had wearied of their impious work of mutilation. These passages are quite dark, and it is necessary to enter with lamps and torches. Bats are numerous, though mercifully there are no tigers or snakes as one might expect. Still, it is as well to

examine the ground carefully with a torch for possible reptiles. On entering, one is immediately impressed with the perfect ventilation which ensures a free passage of fresh air.

The central chamber is roofed with very fine bricks. A colossal Buddha is seated on the throne. The exterior of this remarkable building is now a shapeless mass of ruin. It was once covered with Buddha images from which the shrine derived its name. Since this monument is subject to 250 inches of rain in some years, it is not surprising that, after all these centuries, water has penetrated. Many of the interior carvings are badly water-worn. In the vicinity is an inscribed pillar: also a solid stone *stupa* in which Min Ba, the royal founder of this unique pagoda, is buried.

So far, nothing has been done to preserve any of the shrines of this type. Their conservation is indeed beyond the financial capacity of villagers, and steps are now being taken to prepare proper estimates. The uprooting of jungle growth, and the thorough cementing of the exterior, would greatly prolong the life of these monuments. The Dûkhan Thein, or "Shrine of Sorrow," is also a fortified pagoda similar in type to those already mentioned, yet sufficiently different to merit separate description.

The slope of the outer walls, and the loop-holes with which they are provided, denote plainly the defensive nature of the pagoda, which was, in fact, a refuge for monks, just as the Shittaung was a refuge

for the King and Court. The unadorned simplicity of the entrance recalls the niches of Gandhara, which in turn suggest a Babylonian prototype. In this pagoda the passages are arranged quite differently. Instead of an inner and outer passage, a single corridor winds round and round the interior of the building in a gently ascending spiral and leads to a chamber in the extreme summit of the monument. As an engineering feat it is remarkable. The walls are at least 7 or 8 feet thick. The ventilation is again perfect, though the interior is quite dark. The passages are lined with seated Buddhas, their heads slightly bent forward to fit the curve of the arch. Many are mutilated. At intervals the corridor narrows, apparently for purposes of defence, and in other places widens out into spacious vaulted halls. These were formerly protected by doors whose iron staples still remain. Grotesque dwarf figures (*Dwa Pals*) armed with clubs are carved on the jambs, apparently to guard the doorways by their mystic influence.

The final chamber at the top of the pagoda is imposing. Its stairs and arches recall the vaults of the Tower of London. The room is lit by a wide window, and shafts of evening sunshine beat in through the loopholes.

The outside of the Dūkhan Thein is less dilapidated than that of the Shittaung, but in this case brick work has been interspersed through the stone, and has proved a source of weakness. The pagoda was built by King

Min Sakkyā, a grandson of Min Ba, the founder of the Shittaung. On the steps leading up to it a figure of the King of Pegu, upside down, has been carved where every one may tread contemptuously over it—a reminder of that bitter hatred of the Arakanese for Burma which survives to this day. These three shrines, as I have explained, have no known prototype. They appear to be unique in India or Burma.

We now continued our pilgrimage to Mahamuni, passing out of the ruins of Myohaung by a waterway where, I was told, the Burmese drove large numbers of Arakanese into cages and drowned them. The memory of every such massacre is zealously preserved even after 135 years.

The distance from Myohaung to Mahamuni by water is about 35 miles. The river into which we turned becomes increasingly beautiful. The Dhanni palm of the lower reaches, which is apt to be monotonous, gives place to a more varied growth. The country is covered with paddy fields. Further along the same range of hills as that in which Myohaung lies we passed the Thingyit Daw Pageda, reputed to contain the frontal bone of Buddha. King Anawratta of Pagan attempted to remove it, but was prevented from doing so. Immediately below this shrine lies Wethali, or Vesali, the oldest known capital of Arakan. It was also the capital at various other periods. Its history is obscure, but according to San Shwe Bu, Vesali was built in 789 A.D., and flourished till the 10th century.

There is a common belief that vast wealth was buried at Vesali by order of some king whose people were so rich that all wanted to buy and none to sell. To adjust the balance and restore trade, all surplus wealth was buried. As far as is known the massive blocks of stone which are supposed to cover the treasure in a ruin called Shwe-daung have till now defied all attempts to move them. Excavations, started by a schoolmaster, with one hundred coolies, three years ago, failed.

Steaming on, we passed a famous racing boat which lay in a shed. It is 96 feet long, and is said to seat 80 rowers. A *Nat* has his shrine close by, and the boat, which has won many races, is never launched without offerings and a great deal of ceremony. The Arakanese are fond of boat-racing, though it is said they do not bet about it like the Burmese. Their great festival is the Water Fête of *Tāgoo*.

And so we came to the pagoda which once enshrined the Mahamuni image, and here we must cast back hundreds and hundreds of years to mythical times before the dawn of history, to which dim age belongs the Silagiri Legend. At that time (540 B.C. ?) the Blessed Buddha, accompanied by his favourite disciple Ananda and a host of followers, flew to Arakan and alighted on the Silagiri hill about 5 miles from the present pagoda of Mahamuni, which was then the site of a great city called Dinnya-waddy "Land of Paddy." The Burmese never use the word Arakan, but speak of the country to this day, as *Yakaing Pyi*, or *Dinnya-waddy*.

The King hearing of the Buddha's arrival, went out to meet Him with his whole court and army. Buddha now recognized the country as the site of several of his own past existences, and prophesied where in time commemorative pagodas would be built. Then the King humbly begged to be allowed to cast a brass image in the exact likeness of the Master. Into this image Buddha breathed, and upon it transferred the obligation of expiating certain of his former sins still potent, such as the breaking of a man's leg, and the cutting of a man's back. It will be remembered that centuries later the leg and back of the image were mutilated by Pyu invaders. Thus *Karma* is fulfilled—"tomorrow, or after many days."

Treasure was poured out for the casting of this wonderful image of Mahamuni, which from that day was the centre of religious and political life in Arakan, the pride of the people, and the envy of their neighbours, whose many invasions were merely attempts to possess themselves of Mahamuni. At last in 1785 the image was carried off by the Burmese to Mandalay where, protected by splendid gates, half buried in gold leaf, it sits to this day in a blaze of electric light upon its flower-laden altar in the Arakan Pagoda.

The extraordinary antiquity ascribed to the Mahamuni must, of course, be accepted with reserve. Large images were not cast in India until the 5th century A.D. : and in Burma proper no images at all were made before the 11th century. There is no reference to

Mahamuni in any inscription. Its perfect lines, its well developed Mongolian countenance, are evidence against the supreme antiquity claimed for it.

The original pagoda in which Mahamuni was enshrined is known to have been repaired in 789 A.D., and again in 810. For the next nine centuries the image passed through many vicissitudes, its shrine being destroyed and rebuilt at least seven times. Burmese, Talaing and Pyu invaders often attempted to remove it, and besides this the wild folk of the adjacent hills looted and burnt the wealthy pagoda whenever strong enough to do so. In 1118 A.D. (as already mentioned) an Army of Pyus and Talaings was sent by Alaung-Sithu, King of Păgān, to restore a fugitive King of Arakan. In part-payment of his obligation, this King repaired the temple at Buddha Gaya on behalf of Alaung-Sithu, and recorded the fact there by an inscription in Burmese. This Pyu army is the one which, after restoring the rightful king, despoiled Mahamuni and mutilated the image. The invaders were, however, still unable to remove it. The country must have now fallen into great disorder. The pagoda became a ruin, was overgrown, and actually lost for fifty years, until King Datha Raza made a search for it in the 12th century. The image was found buried to the neck in debris. It was then removed to Dinnya-waddy, a place less open to attack from the hill tribes. The original site being again forgotten, remains unknown to this day. The leg and back of the image were restored.

In 1784 Bodaw Paya¹ conquered Arakan and in the following year removed the image to Amarapura (Mandalay). It was floated on a raft down the quiet waterways of Arakan, then out to sea, and was eventually transported across the Yomas by way of the Taung Up Pass, which was specially prepared for its passage. The successful transportation of the image to Burma was no doubt a remarkable feat. The wretched King of Arakan was carried off also, together with a number of pagoda slaves whose descendants are found in Mandalay still².

The shrine of Datha Raza at Dinnya-waddy has been ruined many times. Portions of the original stone gates remain. It has long been the custom for people to rub their fingers on the walls and then pass them over any part of the body which aches. The walls are now pitted with holes made by the rubbing of generations of fingers. The same habit survives in Mandalay in connection with certain bronze figures which were transported along with Mahamuni. The custom was undoubtedly derived from Arakan.

The pagoda at Dinnya-waddy (now called Mahamuni) was restored in the last generation, and a replica

¹ Bodaw Paya (1781-1819 A.D.) was the sixth king of the Alaungpra dynasty. See *A Burmese Enchantment*, page 227.

² The descendants of several captive colonies survive. Amarapura is largely Manipuri. Arakanese were settled by Bodaw Paya at Mandalay, and Portuguese by Bayin Naung at Monywa. The latter have clung to their names and their faith, and Catholic Burmans called Petro and Don Fernandez are fairly numerous round the Cathedral in Mandalay.

of the original image set up. The shrine—a dreadful affair of tin—has no artistic merit, except that its fine teak pillars and the splendour of the Buddha's throne lend a certain magnificence to the interior. The image itself is not a good copy. But all this is the pious work of comparatively poor people, who had not at their disposal the resources of kings. They cast a beautiful bell at the same time, and inscribed upon it in stately language the story of Mahamuni. Referring to the loss of the image, this record simply states that “the life of the Kingdom of Arakan having come to an end, the Burmese took the country and removed the image together with the King and Court to Amarapura, where the image is suitably enshrined. And the life of the Burmese Kingdom having also come to its appointed completion, the British superseded it. But this holy site with all its sacred associations must surely bring tears to the eyes of all who behold it.”

BOOK TWO:—UPPER BURMA.

CHAPTER IX.

SHWE-ZET DAW.

(*Map Square C.K.*).

IN the month of *Tabaung* (March) crowds of pilgrims from all parts of Burma gather at the Shwe-zet Daw Pagoda. Thousands more are deterred from attending the festival by the hardships of the journey. For though Shwe-zet Daw is only 32 miles from the Irrawaddy at Minbu, and 48 at Salin, and is moreover one of the most sacred shrines in Burma, the roads are so awful that many old people are afraid to travel by them. It is remarkable that the two most important shrines in the country—Kyaik-hti-yo and Shwe-zet Daw—are without first-class cart and motor roads, though both are within easy reach of rail or river, and are visited yearly by thousands of people. In spite of this, and though Shwe-zet Daw has no architectural beauties, and is situated in ugly country, the pilgrimage is worth making on account of its extreme importance in the eyes of the Burmese. It must, however, be confessed that for once they have made a mistake. Kyauk Bādaung across the river, which we shall visit presently,

would, with its quaint pagoda-crowned cliffs, and with Mt. Popa in the background, have been a much more attractive site for a great festival.

We approached Shwe-zet Daw from Minbu, where the mail steamer cast us out on a burning bank at midday, leaving us to trudge across a mile of sand. At the end, however, we were lucky to secure a motor lorry as far as Sāgu. My party was formidable. Every Burman remotely connected claimed to travel with me. Their wives and children claimed the same right: and several old mothers and attractive nieces joined *en route* as stowaways. We therefore reached Minbu 21 strong, with an appalling pile of luggage. I trembled for the P. W. D. bridges as the lorry thundered over them. Our driver was the usual skilful but highly reckless Burman, who took everything at full tilt, in spite of the fact that my bicycle was tied across the bonnet of the car with bootlaces. It is always useful to take a bike about in Burma. In summer there is usually a footpath, or at any rate a cart-rut to follow, and the terrors of such a ride are at least less vivid and prolonged than those of a bullock-cart.

Next day we travelled in a cloud of dust by what were said to be inter-village tracks. Later we reached a canal, and here the going was comparatively good as carts were confined to one side of the road by rows of posts. The canal also changed the aspect of the country which was here green and wooded: but this festival of the Dry Zone occurs at the driest and dustiest season

of the year. We now joined the main stream of pilgrims from Salin whose bullock-carts streamed onward all day, and for many days.

Two exquisite birds enrich this unpromising bit of country. These are the Paradise Flycatcher and the Small Minivet. Both are rare, or at any rate extremely limited in range, but as it happened I saw each from the verandah of the rest-house, respectively at Minbu and Shwe-zet Daw. The Burmese Paradise Flycatcher is ordinarily an inconspicuous chestnut bird, with a black head. But in the breeding season the adult cock is pure silvery white, with a blue-black head, and a tracery of dark lines over the back. The two central tail feathers are then extraordinarily lengthened, and float behind the bird like white ribbons. The Small Minivet deserves a better name. It has a dark slate-blue head, neck and throat, whitish under-parts, and a bright scarlet breast and rump. The female is dove-grey instead of slate, and lacks red on the breast. These two birds, which I have not met elsewhere, are as lovely as any found in Burma. Amongst other interesting birds the Stork-billed Kingfisher and an immense Horned Owl occur : and where the canal overflows White Ibis and White-necked Storks collected in small numbers.

The last march of 8 miles from Sedaw to Shwe-zet Daw is over low, sterile hills. At this season, only the HTANAUNG BIN gives a touch of green. All the other trees are leafless. The journey, like that to Kyaik-

hti-yo is divided into "stations" such as Yo-gyi Záhkan (*"Stage of the Ravine"*). At Lok-se Chaung pilgrims search the sand for little white pebbles because here Buddha rinsed rice from his mouth. Hence the little white pebbles, and the name "Mouth-Rinsing Stream." None of the little girls strenuously digging had found anything, and I fear most of the desirable pebbles have been removed long ago. At each of these stations there are sheds where pilgrims rest and buy refreshment. The charitable—and there are always hundreds in a Burmese crowd—buy water-jars, and pay for them to be kept filled. Over each is a slip of paper, with a notice such as:—Than-jo-yon Quarter, of Magwe, Maung Mya, his wife, sons and daughters, dedicate this water-jar. Let Nats and Men cry "Thadu." Water is brought from a distance in carts. At Shwe-zet Daw itself there are taps. Further, the Burmese prefer condensed milk to fresh, and for all these reasons serious epidemics seldom occur at the festival.

On this last stage the road is abominable. The dust billows up, and hangs like a fog over the slow moving carts. At last Shwe-zet Daw comes in sight—a low range of hills with the principal shrine halfway up, gold amongst the amber trees. There are other shrines on the hilltop, and many covered stairways: and at a distance a white pagoda on Yáthe Taung (*Hermit Hill*). This is the best aspect of Shwe-zet Daw for on closer inspection it is found that none of the

buildings are of any artistic merit. The main shrine, which we may believe was really beautiful, was burnt down four years ago, together with many *tāzaungs* (pavilions) around it. Every effort is being made to repair the damage, but funds are not unlimited, and the place will not resume its former splendour for some time. Just now mounds of brick lie at the foot of the hill which pilgrims carry up for merit, or pay for being carried up; and the brick-heaps growing on the hill do not of course improve its beauty. But in spite of this, I thoroughly enjoyed the five days we spent here—perhaps because my Burmans were so pleased, and so touchingly expressed their gratitude at being brought on a pilgrimage of such extraordinary merit.

The chief interest in the festival lies in the people themselves, of whom ten thousand were camped in the shingle bed of a clear stream at the foot of the hill. This stream almost encircles the shrine, and loops back three times towards it, being loath (so the Burmans say) to leave the sacred spot. The festival continues for a whole month. Besides Burmans from all parts of the country, it is the resort of Shans and Arakanese, and of Chins from the adjacent Yomas. These Chins are shy folk, dressed almost entirely in brick-red garments. Their bags and blankets are pretty. Some of the lads are of fine physique. The girls are often pretty, but many have blackened the face with tattoo marks, a disfigurement said to have been intended

originally to discourage Burmans. All these crowds are housed in sheds spreading along the river bed for nearly two miles. Some of the sheds are built by the pagoda trustees, others by stall-holders, and others by gold-leaf sellers who retail gold leaf to the pilgrims. This temporary town is an important market, crowded by day and brilliantly lit by night: and there are endless stalls, eating-shops, *pwes*, merry-go-rounds, and other delightful amusements. The crowd is in holiday mood, but of course (being Burman) is subject at intervals to sudden and violent disturbances. However, while we were there, I think *only* one person was killed.

The sanctity of Shwe-zet Daw arises from the fact that the Buddha alighted here on his legendary visit to Burma. The spot is marked by a little gold pagoda in the river bed. In this ravine lived a demon, Pananda Naga Min; and on the hill above a hunter, Thit-sa-ban-da-ra Mokso ("The Faithful"). Both were converted, and besought Buddha to leave a mark (*set*). The Golden Royal Marks (*Shwe Set Daw*) which the Buddha made are two footprints, one in the river bed, and the other halfway up the hill. Both marks are now enshrined and thickly coated with gold leaf which pilgrims lavish upon them. Such in brief is the legend. It has many ramifications. For instance, the hunter shot a deer from the top of the hill. There is a dent in the rock where he knelt, and you will specially marvel at this. There is a shrine to Kathapa Buddha, and

one to the Thaggya Min : and a heavy stone that you can only lift by invoking the power of the pagoda. If you measure a stick with your arm and rub it on a certain stone, the stick will be lengthened or shortened as desired. We found all these things perfectly correct, and indeed spent a most ingenuous and happy evening on the hill. From the summit there is a fine view of the encircling river, and of the booths along its banks. The ravine below is packed with gaily dressed people. Already lamps and fires glitter here and there in the dusk. The air is laden with the melody of gongs, while night lays a soft mantle upon the nakedness of the surrounding hills.

Sein.yaung so
Taung nyo ga hmaing.
Thi-da hkwe lo tha
Ye pat le waing.

Deep shades surround the hill
Against the twilight gloaming.
Across the plain below
A shining river roaming.

At Shwe-zet Daw I first met the child-Nat Ma Nemi, and promptly made her my own, marvelling at her story, and at my blindness in not seeing her before. Ma Nemi is about us everywhere in *Nat* shrines all over Burma. She was being rocked in a cradle by an old Burmese lady who kept a whole shed-full of *Nat* images. I begged an introduction.

“Ma Nemi,” said the old lady, “is a niece of Maung Tint De.” Tint De was a blacksmith of Tāgaung, who was cruelly executed with his sisters, and is now enshrined on Mt. Popa. Ma Nemi is the little daughter of the youngest sister Thon-ban-hla. Her father came from Pegu, so she is sometimes spoken of as the ‘*Pegu Nat*.’ Being left an orphan, she was called Nemi (“Little friendless”). Very soon she died and became a *Nat*, and besought King Anawratta of Pāgan to provide her with a refuge. The King seeing her loneliness, assigned her a home in the cradles of babies. This legend, as its Tāgaung origin shows, is one of the oldest in Burma. From a remote age there survives the tragic figure of a forlorn little maid playing with dolls and cradles. She still occupies cradles, and makes the babies laugh. And when they are hungry, or if offerings are not made to her, she makes them cry. In *Nat* shrines you will usually see her swinging in cradles such as are used by babies in this country—and people offer her dolls, bangles, tiny shoes and other toys to play with. Her story is as moving as that of Jizo, the guardian of dead babies, at whose shrine at Kujo-mizu (Kyoto) the stricken mothers of Japan offer little garments, pebbles, toys and oranges. Even in this material age none will deny the authenticity of Ma Nemi, or question the authority of her touching legend. If you meet her, dear reader, give her a doll or a rupee to buy one with. Life will be richer if you firmly believe.

MA NEMI.

There's a homely little maiden
Who has watched the babies play
Down the never-ending ages,
While the World is growing grey.

A pathetic little figure,
Motherless and all alone,
Who has claimed and has adopted
Every mother for her own.

Still enchanted with her dollies
Babies laugh with *Ma Nemi*,
And will share with her their cradles
In the ages yet to be.

CHAPTER X.

THE PYU.

IN a previous chapter we discussed the Talaings, a race well on the way to extinction, or rather absorption. Let us now collect from various sources the story of the Pyu, whose civilization and greatness was contemporary, but who have passed away altogether: mysteriously vanished from the Earth, leaving behind only a name, a misty legend, and a few inscriptions.¹ The important reciprocal influence of Pyu and Talaing upon each other, and of both upon the Burmese, has only been recognized during the last few years. At an early date the Pyu had a writing of their own, derived from some south Indian script, and which in turn helped to evolve the alphabets of both Burmese and Talaings. Certainly the Pyu have left a more extensive lithic literature than was supposed, though much of it has yet to be discovered. It will throw new light on the early history of Burma, and has already helped to determine some important dates. This new line of evidence has been developed by Mr. C. O. Blagden, who has succeeded in translating several inscriptions. Pyu inscriptions are usually brief records on funeral urns,

¹ I am indebted for my facts to the learned authors of the Reports from 1916 to 1920 of the Archæological Survey, Burma.

but others occur, notably one on the famous quadralingual Mya-zedi pillar found by Forchhammer. This monument was erected at Pāgan in 1112 A.D., and is written in Burmese, Pali, Talaing and Pyu. The Pyu face was deciphered by Mr. Blagden who in this way rediscovered an extinct language. The Mya-zedi pillar is the Rosetta Stone of the Pyu,¹ and is of further value in that it establishes dates connected with Kyan-zittha (1084—1112 A.D.), one of the greatest kings of Burma. These dates are corroborated by an inscription in Prome, and are thus definitely fixed.

The Pyu were one of the several Tibeto-Burman tribes who, shortly before our era, descended through Ssuch'uan and Yünnan into Burma² where, between the 9th and 11th centuries, they gradually amalgamated with kindred races and formed what are now Burmans. This Tibeto-Burman invasion was the second great wave of immigration to enter Burma from Central Asia.³ They had been preceded by Mon-Khmers (Talaing, Palaung, Pale, Wa and Annamites) who, as we have seen, had previously moved down the Mekong Valley, and by a lateral movement overrun Burma, spreading across it very thinly⁴. They offered at first little obstruction to the Tibeto-Burmans until they had been driven together in the vicinity of Prome in sufficient

¹ See my *Pāgan*. Page 27.

² See Taw Sein Ko's *Burmese Sketches*. Page 5.

³ See *A Burmese* ARCADY, Preface.

⁴ Census Report, 1911, Vol. IX. Part I. Page 251.

numbers to resist. Round Prome there began, in the early part of our era, that age-long struggle between Burmans and Talaings which continued with varied fortunes until the 18th century, when Alaungpra delivered the *coup de grace* from which there will be no recovery.

In the 1st century A.D., the Pyu established a capital at Hmawza, six miles from Prome, and gradually fell under the influence of a powerful Indian colony.

Their capital at Prome was a centre of culture, which, as already indicated, had an important influence upon the development of the Talaings in the south, and of the Burmese tribes slowly concentrating at Pagan in the north. Their pagodas, the Baw-Baw-Gyi, Păya Gyi and Păya Ma, cylindrical, and still wonderfully preserved, are amongst the oldest in Burma, and are believed to be one of the direct links between the Indian *stupa* and the Burmese pagoda. They are probably 6th or 7th century. A large Pyu inscription has been found on the Baw-Baw-Gyi, but is not legible. The four lower terraces of this pagoda have not yet been cleared of debris. When excavated, they will no doubt reveal something. A large number of Pyu inscriptions, it is feared, have gone as ballast into the Prome railway track.

In the 1st century A.D., the Pyu are mentioned as associated with two other tribes, the Thet and the Kanran. According to Phayre,¹ the Pyu were attacked

¹ Phayre's *History of Burma*, Page 18.

near Prome by Talaings, and after thirteen years wandering and fighting, a section of them were driven north into what is now Thayetmyo, and thence to Pāgan, where they founded a settlement. Taw Sein Ko believes the word *Pāgan* is derived from *Pu* (*Pyu*) and *Gama*, the "Village of the Pyu."¹ In certain inscriptions Pāgan is written *Pugam*: and in the Shwe Sandaw inscription, *Pokama*. In an inscription set up at Buddha Gaya in 1295 A.D., by an Arakanese Prince, the King of Burma is spoken of as *Pu-ta-thein Min* ("Lord of a Hundred-thousand Pyu").

After the occupation of Pāgan the early Tibeto-Burman tribes are not spoken of separately, but the collective word *Mranma* creeps in, showing the gradual growth and consolidation of hitherto insignificant Burmese communities. Neighbouring countries, however, still associated Burma with the Pyu for a long time. The name Myen (Burmese) does not appear in Chinese records till the 12th century. Till then the inhabitants of Burma are still spoken of as P'iao, that is Pyu.

There are now known to have been Pyu settlements at Taungdwingyi (Magwe). In Yamethin legends regarding them still exist. They occurred far away north at Hlaingyi in the Mu Valley, and at Shwebo. At Powin Taung, near Monywa, the village of Minzu (*Princes' Rendez-Vous*) is so called from the reputed meeting of Pyu Min and Pyon Min—Pyu and Pyon being two ethnic names.

¹ M. Duroiselle no longer accepts this derivation.

At Pāgan the Burmese for a long time occupied merely a quarter of the town, still known as Myin (or Myen) Pāgan. Their amalgamation was, however, effected by Pyinbya, the thirty-third King of Pāgan, who lived in the 9th century A.D. That amalgamation was complete and embraced also the Pyu at the time of Anawratta, who, in 1057 A.D., swept down, as we have seen, upon the Talaings at Thaton, pausing on his way to give the Pyu lingering in Prome their death-blow.

Pyu supremacy was gone. But they remained still a numerous and important community, living apparently on good terms with the Burmese. In 1118 A.D., a Pyu army invaded Arakan under orders of Alaung-Sithu.

In about 1287 a bi-lingual inscription in Pyu and Chinese was set up at Pāgan, presumably by the Chinese (Tartars), to commemorate their invasion of Burma.¹ That the Pyu language should have been used, shows that it was still of literary and political importance in 1287.

After that the Pyu vanish.

The phenomenon causes little surprise in this country. There was no catastrophe, merely an absorption: whereby the Burmese added to their own importance and strength. The process is going on still all over Burma, where in the south large communities of Talaings and Karens, and in the north Shans, Kachins,

¹ Report : Archæological Survey : Burma, 1916 (Para. 51), and 1917 (Para. 56).

Kadus, Malins, Tamans, Chins and many others, are being rapidly Burmanised. The transition is wonderfully easy. These people adopt new speech, religion, dress and customs, and sometimes without intermarrying, become Burmans in two or three generations, with hardly a legend to remind them that they were ever anything else. So it was with the Pyu.

Not long ago in Yamethin I was told that there still exist families who claim to be of Pyu origin, and that they have certain funeral customs, such as burying the dead in vaults in their own paddy fields. These are said to be Pyu customs.¹

¹ Taw Sein Ko's *Burmese Sketches*. Page 6.



GAWDAW-PĀLIN. (Pāgan.)

CHAPTER XI.

PĀGAN.

PĀGAN was the capital of Burma at the height of its glory.¹ Few places are more inspiring. It is saturated with old associations. History lurks amongst its ruins. The very soil is brick-dust. The greatest Kings of Burma are connected with it, and the shrines they built so lavishly rise before me as I write on the terrace of the Gawdaw-Palin. I believe firmly in seizing impressions in the field while they are still fresh and warm; and the monuments spread thickly over the surrounding country could scarcely fail to make a deep appeal. Far away gleams the golden dome of the Shwezigon Pagoda, begun by Anawratta (1044-77 A.D.), and completed by his equally great successor, Kyanzittha. Kyanzittha's own masterpiece, the Ananda, lies white and dazzling in the foreground—a dream pagoda, the most lovely shrine in Burma, and one of the most sacred. The Gawdaw-Palin (“Buddha's Throne”), upon whose upper terrace I rest, is a massive structure higher than St. Paul's, so perfectly proportioned that, from the Irrawaddy, its grey and white gates and spires seem to float like a mirage above the river mists.

¹ Map Square C. K.

Thatbyinnyu ("The Omniscient"), another soaring vision, is almost as ethereal. About these giants lie smaller buildings like the Bidagat Tike built to receive the sacred manuscripts seized at Thaton in 1057 A.D. It was repaired by Bodaw Paya in 1783. The Manuha and Nan Paya were raised by the unfortunate Talaing King during his captivity. The Patho-tha-mya ("Mother of many sons"), whose name suggests its antiquity, is believed to be one of the earliest pagodas, and is indeed associated with the Ari. The Maha Bodi is a replica of the temple at Buddha Gaya : and the dumpy Bu Paya is senior by full two hundred years to all these other 11th and 12th century buildings. Five hundred yards away lies the Shwe-ku Gyi, built by Alaung-Sithu (A.D. 1112 to 1187). That ancient king, in the 75th year of his reign, at the age of 101, was here brutally smothered by his son. To expiate this wicked crime yonder ruin, the Dhamma-yan Gyi, was raised. It is one of the most solid and splendid, though now sadly decayed pagoda. The estimates for its repair are heavy, but it is hoped to save it if I can screw Duroiselle to the point. Through glasses you can already see workmen swarming over the Tilo-Minlo, for whose preservation Rs. 20,000 have been allotted. *Tilo-Minlo* means "Umbrella-want Kingdom-want." The ambition of its founder is indicated by this, and by his own name, Nan-Taun-mya, ("Much asking for palace"). Near by, an exquisite little hall, the U Pali Thein is called after the great theologian, U Pali, a contemporary of Buddha, who expounded law to the



THE ANANDA. (*Pāṇan.*)



First Council. And so on. There is something to learn of many a shrine, while the remaining three or four thousand are nameless ruins of red brick, in every stage of collapse. People say they are all much the same to look at, and so they may be to the uninitiated. Information is not readily accessible. Visitors are left to wander aimlessly amidst ploughed fields, and extremely treacherous lanes; and to thread a labyrinth of pagodas which have a habit of moving away and round each other in a most perplexing fashion. But all the greater ones, at any rate, have a distinct character and individuality, arising as much perhaps from their romances and tragedies, as from the architectural nature of their types.

There is a great deal to be said about these types, and of the influences of Thaton, Prome, Ceylon, India and Cambodia, which conspired together in their creation. Pagan is a tremendous subject to dismiss in a few pages, as we must dismiss it here. In 1914 I wrote a small booklet on the subject,¹ so we must confine ourselves now strictly to generalities, and to certain new facts lately brought to light by the diligent research of archæologists and epigraphists. In several directions it is necessary to modify theories which have long been accepted as true. In this connection I am indebted for information to Taw Sein Ko and M. Duroiselle, the distinguished authors of the Reports for 1916-1920, on the Archæological Survey of Burma.

¹ *Pagan*, Hanthawaddy Press, Rangoon.

To Duroiselle in particular I owe not only a mass of solid fact, but inspiration too, from the romance he can infuse—with two whiskys—into the dry bones of antiquity. It is, however, with the utmost caution that I venture upon any discussion of history earlier than the 11th century. I have submitted all such matter to the highest archæological experts, and Duroiselle has mutilated my manuscript again and again with devastating blue pencil. We are, however, groping through a maze of error, into a darkness in which few points are fixed, and upon which history has not yet shed its light. Research is cutting the ground from under us. The accepted, oft-repeated theories are now open to doubt. Many are completely wrong. The rash surmises of the 18th century—and they cover much of the available literature—are misleading: and the Archæological Reports themselves are full of pitfalls for the student.

Burmese historians are accused of romancing, but their records on the whole are more accurate than any others (except Chinese) in the Far East. They have a fatal weakness for Indian genealogies, which they trace if possible to 528 generations pre-Buddha! They gloss over unpleasant incidents, and describe the indemnity of the First Burmese War as a charitable dole to help the beaten enemy to retire. That, however, is the extent of their deception. Events, even defeats, are recorded. The Tartar invasions are accurately described, except that the expeditions to Tāgaung in 1284, and to Pāgan

in 1287, are treated as one—obviously a misunderstanding. The Burmese, moreover, are one of the few races who have kept historical records, and, though these are less remarkable in bulk and antiquity than those of the Chinese, they are still important. The dates are precise, and their general authenticity has been proved again and again by comparison with the records of China, Tibet and Ceylon. The earliest histories are 15th century: but from the 11th century there are inscriptions. These merely record foundations and dedications, but their incidental references to persons and events make them extremely valuable and suggestive. There is no doubt but that one day the lost history of Burma will be restored and written.

Pāgan, we have seen, was originally a Pyu settlement at a remote period when the Burmese or Mranma, were still scattered, insignificant communities. The amalgamation of Burmese tribes was only begun by Pyinbya, the 33rd King of Pāgan, in the 9th century. Under him it was probably limited to Burmese clans alone. The Pyu were brought within its scope later, perhaps by conquest, by Anawratta. The Pyu of course were also Tibeto-Burmans. We have seen that their earliest capital was at Hmawza near Prome, that they had writing at an early date, and that they have left a larger lithic literature than was suspected. Much of this has yet to be discovered, but Pyu inscriptions, together with those of the Talaings, are already playing

an important part in fixing precisely the dates of many events in the early history of Burma.

The amalgamation of the Burmese begun at Pāgan by Pyinbya in the 9th century, was completed by Anawratta in about 1057, when he suddenly swept down and destroyed the Pyu at Prome, and the Talaing at Thaton. The last event resulted in a tremendous impetus to religion, art, architecture and literature, and is the immediate cause of the architectural and intellectual splendour of Pāgan. But it is impossible now to maintain that the Burmese in 1057 were savages. They had before then a corrupt form of Mahayana Buddhism. They had achieved the arts of war and government. In short, though the Burmese received a highly developed civilization from the Talaing, it is no longer possible to ignore the influence of the Pyu. The greatness of Pāgan, however, began with the fall of Thaton. Before then, the Burmese language, it appears, was not written. In spite of the dry climate no single inscription of earlier date has been found, though numerous writings in Pyu and Talaing of far greater antiquity have survived the heavy rains of Lower Burma. Then, in the 11th and following centuries, Upper Burma was suddenly littered with lithic inscriptions in Burmese, showing that one result of Anawratta's conquest was the invention, or rather adoption, of writing for the vulgar tongue. During the succeeding two and a half centuries thousands of pagodas were built, whose ruins cover a great area, whose survivors are still magnificently

preserved, and which then, and henceforth, became the wonder and admiration of every generation. Pāgan became the acknowledged metropolis of Buddhism. Fortunately the dryness of the climate, and the absence of all jungle except cactus, have ensured the preservation of these monuments. Men and earthquakes are their only enemies: and of these, Man has displayed an unbelievable perseverance in breaking into the images and relic chambers of almost every one of the reputed 5,000 shrines.

* * * * *

A peculiar coincidence of dates and events between Burmese and English history helps to fix this period clearly in the mind. The Thaton Conquest occurred in 1057: the Norman Conquest in 1066: and both had the same intellectual significance. In both countries there was a simultaneous development in art and letters. Winchester Cathedral was built in 1079, the Ananda Pagoda in 1090. Curiously enough, while Henri Beaulerc was translating *Æsop's fables* in England, Kyanzittha was moulding them in plaques at Pāgan. To follow the coincidence a step further William Rufus and Anawratta both met mysterious deaths out hunting, the one in 1087, the other in 1077.

* * * * *

The early history of Buddhism in Burma is obscure. Pure Southern Buddhism, we have seen, was introduced at Thaton probably at the beginning of the Christian era, but missions were not sent in Asoka's time, as is

popularly supposed. At least we have no proof of it. Southern Buddhism was established at Pagan by Anawratta in 1057 A.D., but we are now positively able to assert that there already existed at Pagan a vile form of Northern or Mahayana Buddhism. The existence of Mahayana in Burma, long the subject of controversy, is now settled by evidence furnished by pagodas lately discovered at Min-nan-thu, three miles from Pagan. In these, the frescoes, which are beautifully preserved, are "distinctly Mahayanist and Tantric in character." At Min-nan-thu there survive the ruins of many remarkable monasteries which were the home of those notorious and licentious Buddhist priests called *Ari*. These buildings belong to the 11th and 13th centuries, and are well preserved. Many are two-storey, and handsome plaster mouldings still remain. Their interest, however, is centered in the frescoes of two small pagodas called Paya-thon-zu and Nandaminya.

The frescoes of the Paya-thon-zu are amongst the best in Pagan, and are quite unlike any others. In fact "they represent that phase of religion, so abhorred later, of which the priests were the *Ari*." The Paya-thon-zu is undated, but it belongs to the same period as the Nandaminya, in which there is an inscription, and which was built between 1112 and 1130 A.D. The frescoes of the Nandaminya are grossly obscene and erotic, and strongly confirm the tradition regarding the immorality of the *Ari*.

The obscure story of the Ari has been admirably described by M. Duroiselle in a monograph (now out of print) called *The Ari of Burma and Tantric Buddhism*, from which is taken the following abstract:—The Ari were a Buddhist sect, but were at the same time Shamans and Saktas, addicted to the grossest immoralities. Their evil practices were derived from Northern India or Bengal in about the 6th century, at a time when Buddhism there was seriously corrupted. The pre-Buddhist cult was in fact “a mixture of Nat Worship, Tantric Buddhism, and Hinduism.”¹ This is confirmed by the frescoes referred to, and also by a Tibetan manuscript. They practiced sorcery and alchemy, and held animal sacrifices. They drank heavily, indulged in immoralities, were by no means celibate, and finally claimed the right of *jus primæ noctis*, or violating brides. It was this that probably brought about their fall, and so deeply incensed Anawratta. In 1057, as we have seen, Anawratta introduced pure Southern Buddhism. He failed, however, completely to stamp out the Ari, as the chronicles would have us suppose. His persecution of the licentious priests in fact tended to disperse them over a wider area, notably in the adjacent Shan States, where many *phoongyis* to this day are not celibate. Even in Pāgan they survived, and in this connection an inscription in the Nandaminya, dated 1248 A.D., is of special interest. From this

¹ Duroiselle. *Legendary History of Pāgan*.

record it is clear that the shrine and adjacent monastery were built by a minister with the encouragement of King Alaung-Sithu (Narapati-Sithu), showing that royal patronage of the Ari (previously withdrawn, as we have seen, by Anawratta), still continued. There is also mention of revenue for supplying the priests with meat and spirit twice a day, morning and evening, in direct defiance of the monastic rules of Southern Buddhism. The Ari in fact appear to have suffered no further check until the religious movement under King Dhammacheti in the 15th century ; and until, a century later still, Sinbyushin prohibited intoxicating offerings and bloody sacrifices. The last direct mention of the Ari occurs in the 14th century when at Pinya (Ava) they are represented as soldier-priests.

But even later "Boxing-monks" are referred to as *Ari-gyi-do-anhway*—(Descendants of the great Ari).¹ Such priests were numerous at Ava and Sagaing, where they boxed, drank, womanised, bred and sold horses, and dabbled in alchemy and amulets. In the 18th century a thousand militant monks set out from Ava to fight the Talaings.² No further references occur, but no doubt the old turbulent Ari spirit, which so shocked Anawratta, still survives. Stories are whispered now of monks "turning men" at night in Mandalay. Shan *phoongyis* in Keng Tung openly keep women (*vide* my *A Burmese Loneliness*, page 86). In the restless days in

¹ *Sāsanālan-kāra-sadan.*

² *Tanjutha-dipan-kyam.*

which we now have the misfortune to live, the *phoongyis* have at once thrust themselves into politics with unseemly passion. Some openly repudiate their rules. Some have ceased to observe Lent. They attend political meetings in flat defiance of the *Thathanabaing* (Arch Bishop), and hotly resent the re-appointment of a *Mahadan Wun* (Ecclesiastical Censor). These things appear very strange, and indeed are indefensible in Southern Buddhism, until we recognize in them the old Ari spirit which has asserted itself down the centuries whenever opportunity offered. This sanctioned libertinism in a section of the Order has rendered the laity insensible. There is no indignant outcry against the *phoongyis*, because the Ari spirit is as old as Time. The people support all monks without enquiry. It is meritorious to feed them, and it is sufficient that a mendicant wears the sacred yellow robe.

Antiquarian research teaches far more than mere history. Rightly applied, it becomes a guiding principle because it illuminates the past, exposes the root of things, and unveils the causes from which conditions arise. The thoughts, sentiments and aspirations of a people are only perceived by examining their source and origin, and the steps of their development. The history of Buddhism explains every peculiarity of the Burmese character. History dictates their attitude to modern affairs. The Ari of old direct the disgraceful riots of *phoongyis*, and live still in the honoured monks of *Amyauk-byin* who beg at dawn, and return at dusk

to their wives and children. The key of the "incomprehensible" (and practically all that occurs here is that), lies in the past.

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Another set of instructive frescoes occurs at Păgan in a shrine called Kyanzittha Onhmin. These represent Tartar soldiers, and also a design of crosses. The latter irresistibly suggest Christian origin. That Christianity (long known in Madras) may have been familiar to South Indian artists employed at Păgan is not at all improbable.

The Tartar soldiers, for such they appear to be, are shown with helmets, plumes and neck-guards—an archer with his bow and arrows, and an officer seated on a camp-stool, with a hawk on his wrist. These may be pictures of the so-called "Chinese" who are popularly supposed to have ravaged Upper Burma and destroyed Păgan in the 13th century.

The influence of China at work to-day in Burma is immense. Without ostentation the Chinese come, marry and conquer; and their absorbing power on a Mongol race like the Burmese is remarkable. The completeness of their peaceful victory is hardly recognized until it is accomplished. In this lies salvation for Burma. The silent work of these Chinamen is vastly more far-reaching than that of Indians. They have associated themselves intimately with the people. They are in harmony with the sentiment and religion of the country. Their family and political loyalty is a good example: and they have built up wealth and credit by



THE BU PAYA. (*Pagan.*)



honest trade. The Chinaman with his singleness of purpose, his diligence, and his thrift, supplies those very qualities which the Burman lacks. But that direct Chinese influence could have been brought to bear at a very early date, as some assert, is impossible.

True, the population of Burma originates from some region near the Yangtsi and Hoang-Ho basins, but their occupation of those territories preceded by many centuries the arrival there of the Chinese. There cannot at that period have been any extensive communication : and later, when the Tibeto-Burman tribes shifted to Burma, China was still separated from them for hundreds of years by Yünnan, which only became a thoroughly Chinese province two centuries ago. The so-called "Chinese" army which took Pāgan in 1287 A.D. was probably composed of Shans, Lolo, Muhso and other indigenous races of Yünnan, officered perhaps by Tartars, and commanded certainly by Kublai Khan's own brother.

The Tartars, however, were themselves foreigners who were later absorbed in the north of China, as Shans were in the south, into the nondescript mass now known as Chinese.

Yünnan, at the period of which we are speaking, was largely Shan. The Shan Kingdom of Nan Chao, which occupied the regions of Tali and Yünnan Fu, was only overthrown by the Tartars in 1253 A.D. That was a period of Tartar activity. They overran Burma as far as Tāgaung in 1284 : destroyed Pāgan in 1287 :

and re-appeared at Kyaukse in 1300. Their grasp, however, was uncertain, and indeed was not sure even in Yünnan until the Panthay rebellion of the last century.¹ The Chinese population of Yünnan is still proportionately small, though their well-known process of absorbing indigenous races.—Shan, Lolo, Myau-tsu, etc.—is now progressing rapidly, as also it is progressing on the same lines in Burma too. But that the Chinese could have influenced Burma from ancient times is physically impossible. The way was blocked and barred; and the intervening provinces, now part of China, were not Chinese until quite recent times.

* * * * *

The history of Burma for some centuries after the Tartar invasions of 1300, and indeed until the rise of Alaungpra in 1753, is extremely confused. It was a period of plots and petty states. When the Tartars took Pāgan in 1287, Tayok Pyi Min was already dead. He had fled for refuge to his son the Governor of Prome, who poisoned him. His successor Kyawzwa, with the help of Chinese "Comforters," still managed to maintain himself at Pāgan for some years.

The country to the north was, however, in the hands of Shan Princes, notably three brothers who had established their respective capitals at Mekaya, Minzaing

¹ There were subsequent Tartar or Chinese invasions in 1444, 1445, 1767 and 1769. See Phayre's *History of Burma*, Page 196: and Syme's *Embassy to Ava*, Page 70: and *Archæological Report*, March 1918, Para. 49.

and Pinya near Kyaukse. Anawratta had built extensive canals at Kyaukse wherewith to provide grain for the then large population of Pāgan. It is curious to note that after the fall of Pāgan all future capitals were grouped close to the irrigated areas of Kyaukse—at Mekaya, Minzaing, Pinya, Sagaing, Ava, Amarapura and Mandalay. Mekaya is 5 miles from the railway station of Singaing—a pleasant place for week-end picnics. Its ruined pagodas survive, but are of little note, and are much overgrown with brambles. The Myitnge River flows placidly by, and Ava can be reached by boat, in a few hours.

The Shan Brothers had helped the Tartars to destroy Pāgan. A few years later they forced Kyawzwa to enter a monastery at Minzaing. The unfortunate King appealed to the Chinese, who sent the army of 1300 A.D., to his relief. The Shan Brothers, however, beheaded Kyawzwa, and bribed the Tartars to retire. The latter were probably not sorry to find the quarrel summarily composed. As a proof of their good-will they laid aside their arms and helped build the Chanthaya Pagoda, which can still be seen at Minzaing, about 6 miles from Kyaukse. So ended the House of Anawratta. The Pāgan dynasty was gone.

The Shan Brothers and their descendants fought and assassinated each other till one, Atthenkaya, excelled, and founded the first capital at Sagaing in 1322. A later prince founded the first capital at Ava in 1364. Its further history will be related hereafter.

A century later we find a Burmese dynasty at Ava, and King Narapadi involved once more in a Tartar invasion. The Tartars marching on Sagaing were repulsed in 1444 A.D., but triumphed in the following year. The unfinished stump of the Thupa-yon Pagoda at Sagaing, whose construction by Narapadi was interrupted by the invasion, is a silent witness of these events.

* * * * *

We will now attempt to revive two or three of the arresting characters who, at this distance of time, move like ghosts across the stage of Pagan. Their indistinct figures are already illuminated with a little clearer light. One day they will live again. Therein lies the romance of scientific research. And dead kings are somehow always more condescending than live ones. Asoka, Babar, Kyanzittha, how intimate, how lovable, they are become !

Anawratta (1044-77 A.D.), is still not very accessible. His rôle is that of soldier and religious reformer. The material at our disposal is meagre, and indeed we can only see him at all through a mist of legend that has fastened upon him. He is certainly Burma's greatest king. He lived in a critical age, and had the wit and strength to use circumstances for his own, and his people's, advantage. We see him most clearly as a soldier—strong, energetic and unscrupulous, yet not unkind, except in moments of ungovernable fury. His treatment of Kyanzittha, as we shall see later, was

harsh. The outstanding feature of his reign is the introduction of Southern Buddhism and of letters which so profoundly influenced the destinies of Burma. Yet, though he did this, Anawratta himself failed to grasp the true benevolence of the new religion. He was in fact a pious fanatic, a fierce oppressor of the wicked, a dreamer of miracles, who, if we may believe the legends, ransacked Pegu, Yünnan and Ceylon for relics. His military expeditions were frankly predatory. His descent on Arakan was a shameless attempt to possess himself of the Mahamuni Image. We are not aware of any provocation on the part of the Talaings justifying the war with Thaton. Simply, Thaton was at the time invitingly weak: and Anawratta's yearning for holy books, which was the ostensible excuse for the raid, may be accepted at its face value. It is, however, possible that the Talaing and Pyu were a minor consideration, and that the real object of his expedition was to crush aggressive Indian colonies. The result in any case was the amalgamation of Burma, perhaps for the first time, under one strong government.

With Anawratta is associated the pathetic figure of his victim, Manuha, King of Thaton, who lived many years a captive at Pāgan. Anawratta appears at first to have treated him generously, though later the unfortunate prisoner was subjected to some indignity, and was, in fact, dedicated as a slave to the Shwezigon Pagoda. However, in 1069 he was in a position to build two beautiful shrines at Pāgan,

the Manuha and Nan Paya. Both are well preserved, and the former is remarkable for the jugglery whereby no less than four stupendous images (one is 100 feet long) have been fitted into quite a small building. We witness in poor Manuha a spirit of dignity and fortitude. Dragged from his throne at the head of the highest civilization then known to Burma, he patiently devoted his hopeless captivity to works of art which, by reason of their Indian style, were destined profoundly to influence the architecture of the country.

Before leaving Anawratta, we must notice another remarkable personality of his *entourage*—Shin Araham, the patron of religion, the apostle of Southern Buddhism to Upper Burma. He was a Talaing, and appears as a young man of about 18, at Pāgan shortly before the invasion of Thaton. Indeed, his presence may well have roused the seed of cupidity in the mind of Anawratta. At any rate Shin Araham was pure in heart. He taught a new and beautiful law. He strenuously exposed the vicious Ari priests, the scandal of whose lives is remembered still. His expression was sweet and calm. We can see him kneeling still in the Ananda Pagoda, with folded hands. His statue, by a contemporary artist, is one of the only two of its kind in Pāgan, and is no doubt a good likeness. The later acts of his life are officially recorded in several inscriptions on stone. In 1086 A.D., he assisted at the coronation of Kyanzittha. In 1090 he attended the dedication of the Ananda. He lived on into four reigns, and died

full of years and honour in the days of Alaung-Sithu in about 1118 A.D., aged 81.

Some mystery attaches to Anawratta's death. He was killed out hunting by a *Nat* in the form of a White Buffalo. Modern pictures show him on his elephant fighting for his life. They say his body was never recovered. Very likely the secret cause of Anawratta's hunting accident is the same as that which brought about the death of William Rufus ten years later.

He was succeeded by his eldest son Sawlu (1077-1084), an unworthy heir, whose foolishness soon brought him to grief, and cleared the way for the great Kyanzittha. Kyanzittha is one of the most attractive figures in Burmese history, and deserves a short chapter to himself.

CHAPTER XII.

A STORY IN STONE.

Kyanzittha.

KYANZITTHA is one of the most arresting figures in Burmese history. His reign followed that of Anawratta, with only the short one of Sawlu intervening. The days of Anawratta and Kyanzittha are remembered still as the most magnificent in the story of this country. Kyanzittha was contemporary with Henry I of England. He reigned for 28 years at Pāgan from 1084 to 1112 A.D. : and his dynastic title is *Tri-Bu Vana-ditya Dhamma Raza* (Excellent King of the Three Orders of Men).

There are two sources from which the romantic story of Kyanzittha may be restored. First there are a few stone inscriptions which are authoritative and suggestive, but of course limited in scope. And secondly, there are legends which are extravagant and fanciful, but which, in spite of flying priests, fairy horses, dreams and divine manifestations, no doubt contain a certain amount of truth. Their very extravagance suggests that the story of Kyanzittha has made a strong appeal to the love and admiration of his people.

The character of Kyanzittha, as represented by tradition and by inscriptions, is almost an ideal. No

doubt he had faults, but they are not revealed ; and we are hardly justified in inventing them. As history depicts him, so only must he be described. Kyanzittha is an intensely human and lovable figure, unstained by those bloody crimes which marked his predecessors, and which, for several centuries after his time, became the normal routine of each reign. There is no act of treachery, selfishness or cruelty told of him, with the single exception of a fable that he killed the architect of the Ananda Pagoda lest he should produce another monument as wonderful. Such tales are told of many famous buildings, and, although they cannot be entirely dismissed, they must not be accepted without reserve. Such an act is foreign to Kyanzittha's nature, and on the contrary many stories survive of his kindness and generosity. The vicissitudes of his youth and childhood seem to have softened and humanized his disposition. By birth he was illegitimate, and was therefore regarded with special disfavour by Anawratta, his mother's husband. Further, Anawratta was frightened by dreams that Kyanzittha would succeed him : and later on when the child grew to be a man, the king no doubt had cause to fear his evident popularity and ability. There are legends of three separate massacres of women and children that were organized for Kyanzittha's destruction. From these incidents, it is thought he derived his name, Kyanzittha or Kyanyittha, from *Kyan*, remaining, *Yit*, to be left behind, and *Tha*, a son. The massacres themselves are probably exaggerated

to make them rival Pali stories. Burmese historians have a fatal habit of creating parallels with Indian history. It is, however, possible that attempts *were* made on Kyanzittha's life. His mother was a princess of Vesali sent over to Anawratta, and his father was the minister who escorted her. Kyanzittha was no son of Anawratta's, and illegitimacy is widely accepted. A comforting suggestion has been put forth lately that the princess came from Vesali of Arakan and not of India, but to accept this we must disregard all the early historians in favour of a recent one, and further ignore the fact that Vesali of Arakan was destroyed in 1018 A.D., and had ceased to be a capital before Kyanzittha's day! But whatever his birth, Kyanzittha lives vividly still in the imagination of the people.

At the time of the last massacre, Kyanzittha was already grown up to boyhood. His mother brought him to Pagan itself, thinking that that would be the last place where search would be made, and when he grew a little bigger she entered him as a novice in one of the monasteries. Later on Anawratta discovered his presence and became for a time more or less reconciled to him, and even took him into the palace.

As Kyanzittha reached manhood he developed personal beauty and strength. He must also have possessed a charm of manner which won him universal popularity. Anawratta, conscious of his attractions, kept him in a state of poverty, so that the boy subsisted mainly on allowances and gifts from the courtiers.

He possessed magnificent horses, the gift we are told of *Nats*, but was so poor that he used to graze them himself. Marvellous stories are now told of his deeds of strength, and how he hurled his famous spear across the Irrawaddy. The place where he stood, and where the spear landed, are still marked by monuments. In the war-like days of Anawratta his military qualities found a natural vent, and he became a noted general associated with three others—Nyaung U, a great swimmer, Nga-lon-la-hpay, a great climber, and Nga-twe-yu, a great plougher. Their exploits and feats, and the wonder of their magic horses, are still the theme of many romantic legends. The association of Kyanzittha's name with the legend of Shwe Byin Gyi and Shwe Byin Nge suggests that he took a leading part in Anawratta's expedition to Yünnan, if, indeed, there ever was such an expedition.

He also accompanied Anawratta on his expedition to Prome and Pegu, and appears to have given the King considerable provocation by paying attentions to the Talaing princess whom Anawratta was bringing home for himself. Anawratta swallowed his anger at the time, but recalled it later when his jealousy was again inflamed. Anawratta was a man subject to fierce gusts of passion. According to legend it was only the intercession of the saintly Shin Araham that saved Kyanzittha's life on this occasion. The king exiled him, but secretly sent assassins after him, and from this incident arise a crop of marvellous

adventures, from which of course Kyanzittha emerged safely.

The country is still animated with the legend of his exploits. Sometimes he was a fugitive, sometimes a cowherd. The name of Pedaung in the Myinmu township means "Ask for lentils" because he begged food there. The villagers told him he might have it at Pāgu ("Pick up lentils"). He ate them raw with disastrous consequences at Shwe-yin-na ("Stomach-ache Village") but recovered at Shwe-yin-ma ("Stomach Better"). Anawratta sent cavalry to watch him, and Myinmu ("Commander of Horse") derives its name from the incident.

In one of these distressful periods romance entered Kyanzittha's life at the village of Htilaing near Chaungbyu, where he fell in love with Thanbhula, the daughter of a small official. Thanbhula nursed him through a serious illness, and by her gentleness won his heart. Before their child was born King Anawratta died (in 1077), and, Sawlu having succeeded, Kyanzittha was recalled. Kyanzittha, however, never forgot Thanbhula. He always retained a deep tenderness for her, and her sweet nature continued its influence upon him throughout his life.

Sawlu was a well-intentioned man, and a brave one, but weak and vacillating. He soon exiled Kyanzittha again, and again recalled him. The legends relating to this period are busy with omens portending our hero's speedy elevation to the throne of Pāgan. On one occasion, it is said, a great cobra spread its hood

over him as he lay asleep on the ground in the suburbs of Pāgan. On that site he afterwards built the Nāgayon Pagoda, which is still well preserved. His sweetheart, Thanbhula, when she brought him food, was petrified with horror at the sight of his danger, and on the spot where she stood he subsequently raised the Thanbhula Pagoda in her honour. This shrine also still exists, and is remarkable for the beauty of its frescoes.

Sawlu's reign lasted only six years, and its tragic incidents all tend to confirm a favourable opinion of Kyanzittha, which opinion is indeed forced on us. The immediate cause of Sawlu's death was a quarrel with his own foster-brother, Nga-ya-man, over a game of dice. Nga-ya-man was governor of Pegu. After the quarrel he withdrew to his province, collected a Talaing army, and marched on Pāgan. Kyanzittha was sent to oppose him and found the enemy occupying an almost impregnable position, flanked by water, and protected in front by a treacherous marsh at Pyi Tha'kyun. Well knowing that Nga-ya-man could not collect supplies there, he declined to attack under such unfavourable conditions. The impetuous, brainless Sawlu commanded instant attack. Kyanzittha refused. Sawlu accused him bitterly of cowardice, assumed command himself, and dashed at the enemy. His army became inextricably bogged, and the day ended in complete disaster. Sawlu was captured, and Kyanzittha escaped to Pāgan, where the ministers offered him the throne. There can be no doubt but that at this time Kyanzittha

alone possessed the confidence of the nation. He had long been a favourite with the court and the army. Nevertheless he remained loyal to his master. He personally led a spirited expedition to rescue Sawlu. The enemy camp was penetrated and Sawlu found. The unhappy King, however, appears to have been flurried. Remembering his ill-treatment of Kyanzittha, and the harshness of Anawratta before him, he preferred to trust himself to the enemy—who was after all his foster-brother. He resisted rescue, and was cut down by the Talaings.

Kyanzittha's path was now clear. He hesitated no longer. Collecting his scattered and broken forces he once more gave battle. His genius ensured victory. The Talaings were driven from Pagan, Nga-ya-man killed, and at the invitation of the Government, Kyanzittha assumed the throne. He was crowned with great magnificence two years later in 1086. One of the earliest acts of his reign was to proclaim Sawlu's infant son as his own heir, for, said he, "it is right that the direct line of Anawratta should inherit." That child was subsequently known as Alaung-Sithu, and reigned for 75 years at Pagan.

Kyanzittha built himself a splendid palace at Pagan to the west of that of Anawratta, and was installed with much ceremony. The venerable Shin Araham we know was present. From Chinese sources it is ascertained that the Kings of Pagan held their court in the very early morning, and that it was the custom for the ministers to present masses of flowers of which a few

were placed in the King's hair, and the rest distributed to the pagodas and monasteries. The palace was a wooden structure almost exactly like the one which survives in Mandalay, and which resembles in every detail the traditional palaces of Mongol princes since before the days of Kublai Khan. It is therefore not difficult to picture the scene as it must have been. In a splendid hall the ministers knelt before the throne. Outside, guards stood at the palace gate. Things were so, when one day there was a disturbance, and it was reported that a woman insisted on seeing the King, and refused to go away. She was admitted, a sturdy little boy of eight clinging shyly to her skirt. Thus she stood comely and simple before Kyanzittha, and he recognized her instantly as Thanbhula, whom he had not seen for years. His lover in the days of his distress, she had heard of his fortune and come to him. Descending, he took her hand and led her to his throne, and, turning to his Court he said—"Behold, the Queen of my Heart." In the Myazedi inscription Thanbhula is spoken of as "The most Beloved, Darling Wife."

The reunion so happy, so romantic, was not without pathos. Kyanzittha had lately appointed another boy his heir. He now took his own son upon his lap and kissed him. Tears glistened on his cheeks as he said "One's own blood is the most beloved."

The name of Kyanzittha's son is not known, but his title (an Indian one) was Raja Kumar. He was

about eight years old when Kyanzittha first saw him, and it is evident from the Myazedi inscription that later on a passionate affection existed between this father and son. The history of Burma has no parallel to the devotion whereby Kyanzittha educated his own boy to regard the baby Alaung-Sithu as the heir. Considering his time, the vicissitudes of his youth, and above all the ill-treatment of Anawratta, Kyanzittha's loyalty to Anawratta's baby grandson is amazing.

A Chinese author, writing a century later in 1225 A.D., has thrown some light on the civilization of Pagan. It was then a great city, and the population of the capital and suburbs was probably not less than 100,000. The people, we are told, wore the hair coiled on the forehead, and bound with silk. The Chins pile the hair forward in the same way still. The King wore a peaked hat such as may be seen in the statue of Kyanzittha in the Ananda Pagoda. The now empty wastes of Pagan were then thronged with people; and foreign ships from India, Ceylon and Malay lay in the Irrawaddy below the Lawkananda Pagoda. Pagan was the centre of the Buddhist world, but the majority of its pagodas had not then been built. There was no Gawdaw-Palin, and no Thatbyinnyu in those days. The Shwe-Sandaw, Paleik, Bu Paya, Patho-tha-mya, and Lawkananda existed. Kyanzittha himself completed the Shwezigon begun by Anawratta, and added unique splendour to his capital in 1090 A.D., by erecting the incomparable Ananda. He also built the Nagayon and

Thanbhula Pagodas, whose curious legend has already been told.

Raja Kumar became Governor of Arakan, but is better known as founder of the Myazedi Pagoda at Myin-kaba, one mile from Pagan. The quadrilingual inscription in that monument in Pyu, Pali, Talaing and Burmese has become famous as the Rosetta Stone of the Pyu. It was inscribed by Raja Kumar in 1112 A.D., while Kyanzittha lay dying, and is also important in that it places the dates of Kyanzittha's reign (1084-1112) beyond dispute, and thereby fixes many other dates as well.

Raja Kumar was probably 34 years old when his father died, but Alaung-Sithu—declared heir before Kyanzittha knew he had a son of his own—ascended the throne of his ancestors without dispute. The history of Burma contains no finer example of devotion and restraint.

The closing scene is described on the Myazedi pillar, which gives us one more human picture of Kyanzittha and his son. Raja Kumar had inherited the jewels of his mother, who was already dead. He also acquired her revenues and privileges. With the jewels he made a superb image of Buddha for the Myazedi Pagoda, and with the revenues provided for its maintenance. He brought the image to his father's bedside, and begged him to dedicate it. "May the merit of my gift benefit Your Majesty," he said. Kyanzittha, infinitely touched, rose up from his bed

sprinkled water on the image, and said "*Kaung hlein ! Kaung hlein !*" Those formal words "Good, Good," surely mean far, far more. Rather they express from the dying lips "My Son ! Oh My Son !" Never did cold stone breathe more heartfelt love than this, of husband for wife, father for son, and son for father.

We see in Kyanzittha a man of energy and varied interests. His extraordinary personality endeared him to his people, who recall him still with pride and affection. Few kings of antiquity are remembered so vividly. His name brings brightness to any Burmese face to-day.

His statue, a pair to that of Shin Araham, stands in the Ananda. We see him crowned, handsome, debonair, and every inch a king. The face is open and honest, the jaw strong, the lips full. The expression is bright and humorous. These, as far as we know, are the characteristics which distinguished Kyanzittha, and have endeared him for 800 years to his people.

The Shwe-Sandaw inscription of Prome has bequeathed us another picture of Kyanzittha which there is no reason to discredit :—

"Great.....pious in alms-giving, possessed of armies, of immense wealth. In majesty..... glorious : in self-restraint and kingly duties diligent and discerning,.....devotedly attached to the three jewels, beloved of and pleasing to the Gods. Of heart gentle.....in the strong abode, the excellent city of Pokama, called Arimaddana.

CHAPTER XIII.

MOUNT POPA.

(*Map Square C.K.*).

MOUNT Popa¹ has left with me the happiest memories. I shall not forget days spent in leisurely travel by bullock-cart from the river at Pakkan-Nge to Mount Popa, and then back again *viâ* Taung Sin ("Descent from the Mountain") to the river at Păgan, a distance of 60 miles. Nights passed in friendly wayside *zăyats*, or rest sheds, where my wants were hospitably supplied by kindly Burmans; meals taken under splendid tamarind trees; and sometimes whole days passed in their grateful shade, have altogether made an unusually pleasing impression. These were picnic days, and sometimes the simplest picnics are the best, because pleasure is most illusive the more elaborately it is sought.

Mount Popa rises behind Păgan to a height of about 5,000 feet out of the middle of Upper Burma. It is visible from both railway and river: but, being very far away, is not conspicuous, and is not often visited. Nevertheless it is the combined Olympus and Fuji of Burma. The 37 greater *Nats* have their godly residence upon this mountain; and like Fuji, Popa is of volcanic origin. It has the same perfect fan-shaped cone as

¹ Map Square C.K.

Fuji, and like Fuji it stands out a lone mountain all by itself. And though Popa does not occupy a popular place in the art of its country as Fuji does, it is nevertheless revered and loved by the people, and is the subject of endless legends and fairy stories.

The Burmese are unaware that Popa is a volcano. There are no hot springs in its vicinity, and the mountain has certainly not erupted in the memory of man, or at any rate not since the Burmese have occupied Burma. But there is a legend relating to three of the *Nats* now residing on the mountain which, I would suggest, may possibly refer to a prehistoric disturbance. The scene is first laid in Tāgaung,¹ which simply means that the thing occurred before the dawn of authentic history. Tāgaung, of which the ruins still exist, is the first known capital of Burma. Nothing is certain about it, though many legends relate to it. It is possible that Tāgaung was the capital of very early Shan invaders, and, if so, perhaps the volcanic disturbance, which I think is referred to in the legend of Maung Tint De, occurred before the Burmese came down from China, and so could only be known to them by hearsay.

Maung Tint De was a handsome young blacksmith who lived, perhaps fifteen hundred years ago, near the palace of Sein Taya Gyi, King of Tāgaung.² He was so strong that he could wield a hammer weighing 25 viss

¹ Map Square C.J.

² Tint De's *Myo Yo*, or city wall, is still pointed out in the jungle about 10 miles from Tāgaung.

with his left hand, and one weighing 30 viss with his right, and when he worked he shook the very palace of Sein Taya Gyi. This enraged the king, who ordered Tint De to be killed. Tint De escaped, but the king married both his sisters, and by this ruse, and by promising pardon and promotion, induced the blacksmith to return. Then Tint De was seized, tied to a tree and burnt, and his sisters perished with him. The tree which had been used as a stake was thrown into the Irrawaddy, and eventually stranded at Pāgan. The King of Pāgan learned in a dream that the ghosts of the blacksmith and his sisters were on the tree, and that they were now *Nats*, and in need of help. So he made them a home on Mount Popa, where they live to this day, and where the tree may still be seen in their shrine. Tint De and his elder sister, Shwe Mye-hna ("Sister Golden Face") have become the famous *Maung-daw* and *Hnama-daw* (Brother and Sister) *Nats* of Popa, whose oracle was frequently sought in olden days. Their images to this day guard the ruins of an old gate at Pāgan, the earliest brick ruin there, which was built by Pyinbya, the thirty-third King of Pāgan, in the 9th century.

Maung Tint De's family furnishes a highly popular group of *Nats* whose images are often found in *Nat*-shrines. His wife, Shwe Nābē Thekin-ma, wears a dragon hat. His two sons Taung-min-gyi ("Southern Lord"), and Myauk-min-shin-byu ("Northern White Lord"), are six-armed, and carry weapons in their hands.

His youngest sister, the mother of Ma Nemi, is Thon-ban hla ("Three kinds of Beauty").

It seems worth considering whether the hammering, the shaking of the palace, the burning, and finally the enshrining of the blacksmith's *Nat* on a volcano, may not indicate some disturbance at Mount Popa at a very remote age.

Further, it is related in a Shan legend that a subsidence which created the Inlé lake coincided with the uprising of Mount Popa. This again may refer to some convulsion of which no other human record exists. (The Indawgyi Lake near Mogaung is popularly supposed to have been formed by an earthquake¹).

Pakkan Nge, where the journey to Mount Popa begins, is a pretty little riverside village. Its pagodas are after the style of those at Pagan. The Shwe Tha Baung is attributed to Asoka (*Thiyyi Dhamma Thaw-Ka Min*) which simply means that it is very old. A sense of antiquity is often conveyed in Burmese legends by attributing an event or a monument, of which the history is lost, to Asoka or to the Tāgaung period: or, if not so old as that, to Anawratta and the Pagan period. The Su-Taung Byi Pagoda at Popa is also ascribed to Asoka. This little old shrine at Pakkan Nge, with its gilded carving, its ancient *shikara* roof, its new pavement of pretty tiles, and the tamarinds surrounding it, is very attractive. Near it is another ruin, the Pagan Hmyaw Pāya ("the Pagan hope-to-endanger

¹ Upper Burma Gazetteer. Part I. Vol. I. Page 15.

Pagoda"). This was built by rebellious monks (presumably Ari) who fled from Pagan, and endowed the shrine with a menace to the king. But in front of it now stands the Shin-bäyin Ku Si ("the Royal Cave to Prevent"), which the king caused to be built in order to negative the magic of the monks.

Several local legends relate to King Anawratta, who is said to have dug the lake at Yea Kan Aing. The name means "Water Dry Pond" because water never lies in it for long. This is the result of the curse of a queen who was condemned to death by Anawratta for being late at the ceremony of dedicating the lake. The place of her death is called *Taing Hmwe Htauk Ywa* ("Place where she lent on a staff"): and the village where the king enquired if she was dead, and they told him "Yes, Sire," is to this day called *Hman-ba-Ywa* ("Yes Village¹").

King Anawratta himself was killed while hunting near Pagan by a *Nat* in the guise of a white buffalo. What scraps of history, I wonder, are preserved or distorted in legends such as these, which have fastened themselves about the memory of pagodas and villages, kings and peasants. Here and there a name is indiscriminately chosen to live through the ages. The rest go down into oblivion. Oriental legend is a curious thing. Ignored by the people in their youth, it appears to develop in them automatically in old age, when, by some mysterious process, they acquire the story of their

¹ *Hman-ba* means 'Yes.'

forefathers without apparent effort, and pass it on. It is inherent only in the sons of the soil. Ask an immigrant the legend of his adopted village, and he will reply—"I don't know. I have only been here twelve years."

There is no proper road to Mount Popa from this side. We simply travelled by inter-village tracks. It is the custom here for bullock-carts to go only from one village to another, where, a messenger having been sent ahead, the next relay is standing ready. This was, I believe, the system in Burmese times, and it certainly works well. The bullocks are always fresh, and it was only occasionally that we were kept waiting for new ones.

The country traversed is typical of the "Dry Zone." It is rather sterile, and supports only a thin scrub-jungle with a few fine tamarinds at intervals. These truly splendid trees are all the more welcome for their comparative rarity. Their deep shadow invites a halt; and the time wasted in their shade will not be grudged, though you pay for it in sweat afterwards. Bees hive near by, and butterflies and birds visit the glorious foliage overhead: while on the ground lives a little scarlet insect, which, I suppose, is a sort of spider, and which the Burmese call *Nat-tha-mi Kon Dwe Gaung* the "Fairy Betel-Spit."

The soil of these plains is gravelly, and probably belongs to the Miocene age. The wreck of what must once have been wonderful *Ingyin*¹ forests lie petrified

¹*Aporosa Macrophylla.*

everywhere. These petrified trees are more numerous than the living ones, and supply the neighbourhood with its only useful stone and road metal. The low hills immediately bordering the Irrawaddy opposite Mandalay are also Miocene. The higher hills beyond, which extend towards Sagaing, are probably Devonian (crystalline limestone). Mount Popa is Tertiary. Maymyo is Tertiary and trilobite-bearing, and the mountains of the Salween in the Southern Shan States are Palæozoic. Thus the greater part of Upper Burma appears to be Palæozoic, with beds of Miocene interspersed. At the time when these Miocene beds were laid down it is probable that the Delta of the Irrawaddy had not advanced much beyond Mandalay. It is quite certain that dense *ingyin* forests then covered the country. The fossilized bones and teeth of bison, crocodiles and mastodon (or at any rate of some ancient elephants including *Elphas stegædon*) are found opposite Mandalay in considerable quantities. *Elphas stegædon* is an elephant midway between the mastodon and the mammoth. Eight varieties of prehistoric elephants have been found in Burma.

But to return to the base of Mount Popa. The fields and inter-village lanes are protected by hedges of cactus and *zibin*,¹ whose formidable prickles effectively prevent one from straying far. But though the ground is so barren, more flowers exist than one would suspect : and I gathered 20 different kinds in an hour. One of

¹ *Ehretia acuminata*.

the prettiest is a sort of foxglove (*Se Kālon Bin*), so called from a fancied resemblance of its mouth to that of the mythical bird *Kālon*. Another pretty flower is the scarlet *Sa-mi-daw*. It is a popular table decoration, but is poisonous, and is, in fact, sometimes used for destroying dogs. The Burmese have something to say of, or some use for, nearly every plant, and a few days devoted to Burmese Botany in these parts would be most entertaining.

The names of the different kinds of cactus all begin with the word *tāzaung*. *Tāzaungs* are the highly carved halls, or pavilions with diminishing roofs, which stand in front of every pagoda. The branching arms of the cactus suggest such a pavilion to the Burmese. After careful observation the idea is found to be not too fanciful. The "column cactus" (*Euphorbia anti guorum*), which the Burmese call *tāzaung pyatthat* (pavilion roof), was now, in September, in full bloom. These astonishingly beautiful flowers are not unlike pure white lotus. The throat, where hang innumerable pollen bags, is delicate yellow. These flowers are visited by humming moths. They open at 10 P.M. and close up tight again at sun-rise, so that their nightly splendour is rarely noticed. In the dawn and moonlight the ugly cactus limbs are thus glorified with luminous star-clusters. The "bushy cactus" is called *tāzaung gyi* (the great pavilion). The popular *zibyu-bin* tree is plentiful. Its berries are rather like gooseberries, and though sour, are quenching to the thirst.

The Burmese are fond of flowers. They do not garden in our sense of the word, but nearly always grow hibiscus, antigmon, roses and crotons in pots, or keep orchids, or train a pink creeper called *taik pan* over a trellis roof, just as wistaria is grown in Japan. I have seen a white variety of *taik pan* in Magwe. There must be something in people who love flowers and pay high prices for them. Picnic parties are often seen returning laden with floral spoil.

We slept the first night at Taung Tha in a new *zāyat*, of which the teak beams had been imported from a great distance. My journey being unpremeditated, I had no camp furniture, but here, and at every other village, the *phoongyis*¹ lent me tables and easy-chairs. I was impressed many times with the lavish charity with which rest-houses are so thoughtfully provided for travellers. Seats, sheds and drinking-water are set out under many a wayside tree. One is inclined to take for granted these gifts, which so materially add to the pleasure and comfort of travel in Burma, without considering what they cost, or that they are provided by somebody's generosity and forethought.

The spontaneous hospitality met with on such occasions is quite different from the welcome invoked (or shall I say *provoked*,) when small, fussy officials have you in hand. You are then skilfully surrounded by a cordon of galloping *thugyis*, who eventually head you off into a *z yat*, or shed, adorned with hideous pots

¹ Monks.

and stuffy curtains. The villagers are kept running about laying mats, raising dust, and supplying your supposed craving for cocoanut juice. When these duties are all done and overdone, they stare at you irritatingly in your comfortless if splendid isolation. It is quite essential, if human sympathy is to be restored, to break from such tyranny, and assume a more approachable and less ceremonious seat under a tamarind tree.

We travelled on all next day obtaining relays of carts as we went, and comparing the various exhortations with which successive drivers addressed their bullocks. The formula is nearly always the same, and consists of the word *nwa* (cow), spoken as if the animal's incredible laziness astonished the driver. This is followed by the word *Oh*, uttered as if that exasperating laziness was a thing past endurance. I expect every traveller in Burma is familiar with the *Nwa, Oh* with which the bullock is urged into a crawl.

The bullock cart is truly the symbol of patient protest. Its occupants abandon themselves good-naturedly to tobacco and talk. The bullocks move, but only when urged: and the wheels whine and groan in the loose sand, but not unmelodiously, or with any hope of redress.

I was interested this day to see a cow open a Burmese gate by pulling out the bars sideways. I suppose everyone has read the argument that soulless animals work by instinct and without reasoning. Surely such a view is opposed to the daily evidence

of our eyes, and to the lesson of Science that all our own powers are merely developed from those possessed by lowly ancestors. In the first instance a Burmese cow could only have learnt by reasoning, and not by instinct, to pull a bar sideways. Animals have far more sense, reason and memory than we suppose. Mrs. Bigg-Wither, whose power over wild animals is well known, made some remarkable experiments in the Rangoon Zoo with panthers she had left there two years previously. Though unable to see her when she called, they undoubtedly recognized her voice, rising up immediately and showing the greatest pleasure and excitement. After the War my own dog Salim (now alas gone west) recognized me instantly after an 18 months' absence. My present dog Darby understands almost anything said to him in Kachin or Burmese. On this journey to Popa I acquired another dog who apparently left the steamer with us and adopted us. His friendliness earned him the Burmese name of *Hpaar* (Companion). He proved to be a quiet but very valiant little fellow who, though he never sought battle, routed insulting "pies" of twice his size by the very *clan* of his attack. The local bullies who met us in each village, and who had hitherto had it all their own way, now received a surprise most pleasing to behold.

Monastery dogs are nasty noisy brutes. I question the truth of the Burmese belief that dogs which howl when the gongs begin to sound are those which will soon be reborn as men. Curious, these quaint

superstitions ! Why, I wonder, are Sunday, Tuesday and Saturday lucky days for cutting the hair, and why will Burmese women never sew a garment on Saturday, lest it be burnt ?

* * * *

It was evening when we reached Shya Bin and Gwe Gyo—two charming villages which lie beneath a range of pagoda-crowned hills. The *Thugyi*¹ had put chairs under a tree. Here we had tea, enjoyed the calm of the evening, and listened to the deep note of a gong that someone was beating. At dusk we moved on through toddy-palms, meeting the village cattle on their way home. It was late before we reached Kyauk Bădaung. The Great Bear and Scorpio had set, and before dinner was served Taurus and the Pleiades had risen in the west, forerunners of winter. We had also another promise of winter this day (14th September) in the first appearance of the wagtails. I had watched them stream away in countless thousands on their summer migration on the 12th of March. Now their advance guards had begun to return.

Kyauk Bădaung² is a pretty, shaded village of exceptional interest. A series of rocks and crags rise to a height of 60 or 70 feet out of the plain in a curious fashion, and I suppose suggest the Burmese name of the village which means 'Stone Axle.' At any rate no Buddhist could reasonably be expected to resist the

¹ Headman.

² Map Square C.K.





KYAUK BADAUNG.

temptation of building pagodas on such eligible pinnacles, cliffs and overhung rocks. In such works of merit the inhabitants have indulged freely. The Mya Shwe Ku ("Emerald Cave"), and the Shwe Daung U ("End of the Golden Hill"), are the most important shrines of a big group. If they were less remote, these pagodas would become celebrated. I have never seen anything more quaint than their situation, even in Tibet. Steps have been built up into what would otherwise be inaccessible pinnacles. With perfect taste, just the right shrine of just the right proportions has been poised on each picturesque height, and these symbols, so suggestive of calm and meditation, are thus brought into striking contrast with the wildness of their surroundings.

Mount Popa, with its gracefully up-sweeping lines, is now only nine miles distant. Sometimes it stands cloudless, its regular cone clearly seen. Sometimes a close-fitting blanket of mist entirely hides it. And sometimes vast masses of white cloud are piled up above it to an immense height. From the west two peaks are visible. From the north, whence it more closely resembles Fuji, only one peak is seen: but from all directions the easy lines of its upward sweep are characteristic.

As we approached, the country became more fertile, and toddy-palms more plentiful. Soon we entered the foot-hills, passed a curious pillar of rock called Taung Kāla, and so reached Popa Village. This village lies

low down on the mountain, on easy, undulating ground. A little paddy and much Indian corn is grown. Extensive cultivation is also carried high up on to the mountain, where guavas and bananas are raised, and where the villagers live and sleep in little huts until harvest time in January. Above these areas of cultivation is a belt of jungle, and above that again open grassy slopes sweep upward to the summit. Wild pig are numerous. A few boa-constrictors and many hamadryads inhabit the jungle zones. I have already written about hamadryads in Chapter IX of *A Burmese Enchantment*, and will not repeat myself here. These terrible snakes are often caught by snake-charmers. They do not thrive in captivity, and so considerable numbers are let loose again on Popa every year. The villagers recognize them as dangerous, but say that they rarely attack any one without provocation.

The *Thugyi* of Popa, Maung San Gôn, is a typical Burman of the best type. He is 64 years old, and has been *Thugyi* for 34 years. At annexation he took an active part on our behalf against the dacoits who infested this area, and who made Mount Popa their retreat. He was wounded in one of these engagements, but it is wonderful that any of his people survived at all. Before that, he was an official at the courts of both Mindon Min and Thibaw. He has now four sons serving in the army, and worked vigorously to raise men and money during the war. I went to his house

in the evening to meet his wife, and to see the silver *dahs* presented to him by our own Government, and by King Mindon. He introduced me to one of the dacoit *Bo's* (Leaders) who fought us from Popa, but who now has a son serving with the 1-70th Burma Rifles in Egypt.

The climb to the summit of Popa is not difficult. The path rises steeply, and never once gives away an inch that it has gained. With a couple of guides I made an early start. We passed a few *Nat* images in their rustic shrines. Thence, climbing through the cultivated zone, and on up through the forest zone, we reached the last grassy slopes, where blocks of lava lie scattered about, and at the top suddenly found ourselves looking down into—the crater.

The disclosure of the crater is really dramatic. I had no idea that anything so stupendous existed there, or even that Mt. Popa is hollow, until I gazed with awe and astonishment into its abysmal depths. The two great peaks of Popa are only the highest portions of the lips of this central cavity, into which from all sides the mountain plunges away in magnificent cliffs and precipices, in complete contrast with the easy outer slopes up which we had climbed. One side of the crater has been partly blown away, probably by an explosion in the Tertiary period, when Mt. Popa, with the sea then close to its base, was active. There is nothing to show that it

has erupted since. The crater, I suppose, is a mile and a half across, and perhaps two or three thousand feet deep: and that solitude is said to be the home of millions of butterflies. Far below, the crater floor is seen to be covered with trees, and trees also climb up spurs and gullies wherever they can find footing. The mountain top was now bathed in bright morning sunshine, but dawn still lingered in the awful depths below.

On the highest peak, which the Burmese call Sābabon Daung, we lay and rested on the rich turf, breakfasting, smoking, talking, and pitying the poor devils in the world below starting the routine of one more monotonous day. A wonderful view spread below us from the Arakan Yomas in the west to the Shan Hills in the east. All the towns of Middle Burma were scattered beneath us.

Free days like this on the mountain tops remain like landmarks. We look back to them gratefully. Stretched on the turf, we gaze up into the wonderful sky, hear the bees, scent the flowers, and feel the delicious caress of mountain wind. Light and shadow sweep alternately across the grassy slopes. Cloud billows, which lay at dawn like foamy seas low over the plain, slowly rise and pile themselves overhead. For a moment everything is obliterated by hurrying mist. Then all clears once more, until white vapours come pouring up out of the crater, as if Popa erupted again as of old.

LEGEND.

A godling dwells on mountain top :
And silent is the Blacksmith's shop
Nor shaken with his blows.
The fires of his forge are dead :
For smoke, a whisp of cloud instead
From out the crater flows.

On such a peak a *Nat* may dwell
And spin the lore that old men tell
Of governments o'erthrown :
And play about with queens and kings
And weave a legend out of things
For kingdoms of his own.

He gives the dead immortal fame :
He gives the villages their name :
And hill, and peak, and stream.
The loves of old he renders new
Of emperor, and peasant too,
And weaves them in his scheme.

And with the magic of his hand
He casts enchantments on the land
Where memories are dim :
And takes from half-forgotten dreams
And draws from old historic themes
Whatever pleases him.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOWER CHINDWIN.

(*Map Square C. J.*).

WE will now examine a typical "Dry Zone" district in Upper Burma, choosing Lower Chindwin because it is one of the best recruiting areas, and because there are some curious things to see there. It is poor country, with alternating gravel and black-cotton soil, producing only beans, maize, cotton and ground-nuts. Water is scarce, and though charitable people have dug many wells and tanks, the tanks, at any rate, are mostly dry by March. A good deal of toddy is drawn from palms. The only large trees are tamarinds, which are more or less confined to the villages; but wherever one occurs a *záyat*, or rest-hut, is placed beneath it.

The Chindwin, whose upper reaches we explored in *A Burmese Enchantment*, is here a broad river, fast approaching its junction with the Irrawaddy. Geese, duck and plover haunt the swamps and ponds it leaves behind in winter. Amongst the crowd of waders which collect in these shallows (and also on the lake at Meiktila) I have occasionally seen the *avocet* which has not yet been reported from Burma. Finn says it does not occur. The plumage is white, with black cap, nape and wing-tips, but the bird is easiest recognised by

its long black beak, which is curved strongly upwards, and is waved through the water from side to side.

The Chindwin sandbanks are the home of the great black-winged tern, which lay their spotted drab-and-brown eggs on the open sand in March. You may find their chicks, and those of the *pratincole*, sprawled motionless on the ground, where, indeed, they are very hard to see. The Burmese have a pretty verse about the river tern : -

Above the silver sand

A tern in circles sweeping.

Like me, he seeks his mate ;

Like me, is softly weeping.

The Headquarters of Lower Chindwin are at Monywa. This town was originally a mere collection of huts where boatmen on the Chindwin River bought bread. Hence the name Monywa, or bread village.

Lower Chindwin has, happily for its inhabitants, no history. But while the people, who are exclusively Burmese, lived at home more or less in peace, they have always influenced the destinies of Burma, and have supplied some of its leading characters. Anawratta and Alaungpra who founded the two greatest dynasties, were both natives of Shwebo ; while the Burmese general Bandula (born in Tapäyin Village), the statesman Kin-Wun-Mingyi (born in Mindaingbin Village), and the present great Burmese exponent of Buddhist theology, the Ledi Säyadaw, all came from Lower Chindwin. In Burmese times the army was largely recruited from Shwebo and Monywa. At the present

day youths enlist freely in our army. I got 75 recruits during one of my tours; and 50 more came in later on. The villages are full of men returned from war service in India, Mesopotamia and France—men whose forefathers no doubt followed Alaungpra to Siam, and Bodaw Paya's generals to Arakan. There exists, in fact, a well-established military tradition.

While recruiting in these parts I was able to visit a most interesting group of cave-shrines hewn out of soft plutonic rock in a hill called Powin Taung, about 7 miles east of Yinmabin.¹ The surrounding country is comparatively well-wooded; and Minzu Village, near the foot of the hill, is quite delightfully shaded. Minzu derives its name "Rendezvous of Kings" from the meetings that took place there of Pyu and Pyon. These appear to be ethnic names, and their connection with Powin Taung is interesting as indicating the wide distribution of the now extinct race of Pyu. But though the earliest shrines are of great antiquity, the group as a whole is the accumulated effort of centuries. Additions have been constantly made down to the present day, and include a few of those choice vulgarities with which modern Burmans now love to disfigure their country.

The Powin Taung cave-pagodas cannot, of course, be compared with the cave-temples of Ellora. They are

¹ Mr. Morrow-Campbell, the geologist, to whom I submitted a sample of rock from Powin Taung, found it much weathered and difficult to identify. He considered it to be plutonic rather than lava. At any rate it was of igneous origin.

neither so spacious nor so exquisitely finished. But they are none the less extensive and attractive. The bare limbs of *tăyok zăga* trees forming a tracery of branches across the sky, and crowned with masses of white blossom, give the rocky hill a peculiar charm. Barking-deer are seen near the caves, and the little monkeys which clamber about the rocks are tame enough to claim their share of picnic feasts. The numerous caves are cut out of the hill-side in terraces. Many are small, simple cells, containing one or more images of the Buddha. Others wind in and out through the rock without apparent design, and with unexpected chapels and recesses here and there. Such a one is appropriately called the Wingaba, or "maze."¹ Others again, like the Ko-sin-taing ("Nine Steps"), and the Shwe-tha-lyaung, are altogether more lofty, spacious and elaborate. The Ko-sin-taing, which is reputed to be one of the oldest caves, measures 36 feet by 20. It is about 20 feet high. The vaulted roof is supported by two massive octagonal pillars hewn out of the solid rock. A colossal hewn figure of a seated Buddha occupies the altar; and four large *Belus*, or Demons, of grotesque and uncommon design, guard the entrances.

Throughout this system of caves the doors are highly ornamented with the scroll-like design so typical of Burma. In many shrines the interiors are lavishly decorated with painted frescoes and glass mosaics of

¹ The meaning of the word *Wingaba* is explained on page 21 of my *A Burmese Loneliness*.

great beauty. The face of a cave called Taung-zin-hkunit-ta (*Seven Ranges*) is richly carved with columns of foliage representing mountains, with seas or rivers between. The whole fresco is meant to illustrate Mt. Meru, the Buddhist Paradise.

The human figures which stand beside the doors of the various caves are often dressed in beautiful Burmese costumes. Many of these "door-keepers", however, are *Nats* or *Bilus* of unusual design. Some have horns. Others are covered with scales. These grotesque sculptures are unlike anything known elsewhere, and may possibly be Pyu *Nats*. Amongst other figures, occurs one of the Powin Taung *Nat*, the Goddess of the Hill, riding a tiger: and elsewhere a bullock, also a *Nat*, to which visitors make offerings of grass and leaves.

The great leogriff at the entrance of the Ko-sin-taing is inscribed on the breast with the date 1298 A.D. This is the only ancient inscription known to exist, and the history of these caves is therefore a matter of conjecture. There is a tradition that the earliest caves were made by the Pyu, and though there is no direct evidence to support this, the legend cannot be entirely ignored. From the style of the sculptures M. Duroiselle believes the oldest caves may be 9th or 10th century.

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About 12 miles north of Yinnabin there are some curious depressions or "craters" near the villages of Leshé and Twin, which are popularly supposed to be volcanic but which were most likely formed

by subsidence. None of the rock samples which I submitted to Mr. Morrow-Campbell, the geologist, were of volcanic origin. Some were quartz, and others chalcedonic silica. One was a piece of flint. The two latter indicate deposition from hydrothermal solutions at comparatively low temperature. These curious depressions lie in low country. The one at Leshé is a mile long, and three-quarters of a mile wide. It is more than 100 feet deep, the walls all round being steep and well-defined. The floor of the depression is dry and flat, and now full of palm trees.

A still more interesting depression of exactly the same nature occurs at Twin, where I had breakfast and passed the day very pleasantly under a great tamarind. This depression at Twin is about the same size as that at Leshé, but a good deal deeper, and its floor is now occupied by a beautiful lake, whose jade-green waters are fringed with groves of cocoanut and palmyra palms. There are several villages round about. The whole makes a pretty picture as you look down into it from Twin village. The lake is slightly bitter, but less so than I had been led to suppose. The wind blowing off it has a heavy, stagnant smell, though of course the lake is much too large to allow of real stagnation. There is no exit, and the water is no doubt strongly impregnated with chemicals. The natives lay great stress upon its properties for whitening clothes washed in it. But in spite of these qualities the lake is full of animal life, such as larvæ. There are no fish, but in the rains

a small shrimp-like creature which the people eat makes its appearance. This supposed shrimp proved, on reference to the Zoological Survey of India, to be the Larva of a Carnivorous Dytiscid beetle (*Eunectes griseus*. *Fab.*).

CHAPTER XV.

FORGOTTEN YESTERDAYS.

IN these crowded days the past recedes rapidly. The Alaungpra Dynasty which came to an end at Thibaw's abdication in 1885 has almost reached the legendary stage, though Thibaw himself is but lately dead, and Queen Supayalat still survives. Numbers of Ministers and Maids-of-Honour are yet alive, and crowds of royal personages, including at least two Queens of Mindon Min. The dynasty, however, is a thing of the long-ago past. Its true history is told in the Upper Burma Gazetteer, but in men's minds it is seen as a Golden Age it was very far from being. The timber palace in Mandalay is held together now, with difficulty. The buildings and stockades that surrounded it are vanished, and the Royal City has a depressing and moribund appearance. The previous capitals, crowded close together in Sagaing, Ava and Amarapura, and abandoned in quick succession, are overgrown with jungle, and their splendid but rotten monuments are crumbling to bits. Yet Mandalay, the last of them, was only finished in 1859! Ava and Amarapura with their ruins and avenues of magnificent tamarinds are now the quietest corner of Burma. In Mandalay the trees have not yet had time to grow. Burmese Kings attached much importance to trees. When Mindon

enquired of a returned ambassador how Mandalay compared with London-myo and Paris-myo, the diplomat wisely replied :—"Your Majesty, those villages have not one single tamarind"—*Măji bin ta bin ma shi bu.*

Another typical story is told of Mindon's Court. The King saw the French Ambassador pass the palace and asked "Who is that man?" A Minister replied "It isn't a man, it is a foreigner." *Lu ma hoat bu. Kăla be.*

Mindon, however, is a pleasant figure to look back upon. The arrogance of his predecessors, with the exception perhaps of Alaungpra, was incredible; and the ambition of the dynasty as a whole resulted not only in utter ruin, but produced much misery amongst the people. The record of savage deeds is forgotten with amazing swiftness. Bodaw Paya suppressed a palace plot by burning alive the entire population of a perfectly innocent village. "Every inhabitant of Poungha was dragged from his home. Young and old, women and priests, were assembled and burnt alive in one vast holocaust."¹ Those wretched people in their agony could scarcely have imagined that a century hence theirs' would be remembered as a 'Golden Age.'

Father Sangermano, an Italian priest, gives us an independent picture of Bodaw Paya's time. "Bodaw Paya," he says, "founded a new capital and gave it the name of Amarapura. He ordered all the inhabitants

¹ Fytche. *Burma Past and Present.* Page 75.

of Ava to move to it. The royal order was carried out with extreme rigour. No words can express the sufferings, the fatigues, the exactions, and the oppressions which were brought about by this change of capital." The Italian priest describes the King as a monster of cruelty, pride and mercilessness. His ambition led him to aspire to the actual rank of Buddhahood, and when the monks refused to acknowledge him as such, he oppressed them until the Order had no longer any ostensible existence¹.

The arrogance of Ba-gyi-daw (1819-37) resulted in the First Burmese War. His successor Tharrawaddy (1837-46) was in the habit of testing his rifles by firing at his subjects as they passed his palace. Fytche² mentions that "in his paroxysms of rage he would shoot and stab his ministers with his own hand." It is lucky for the Legislative Council that the L. G. does not now lash out as Tharrawaddy did only 75 years ago.

But, mind you, I am not criticising Tharrawaddy. On the contrary, I wish to Heaven he was back on the throne. I can quite believe that the Y. M. B. A., who look back longingly to his glorious reign, would have no fault to find with him, and if they had, they would only find it once.

Still, I personally prefer Mindon Min (1853-73)—a great sovereign, whose memory is justly recalled with pride and affection. He is spoken of as "genial,

¹ Fytche. Page 79.

² Fytche. Page 118.

amiable and passionately anxious for peace.”¹ He was imperious in manner, and easily led, but yet had a high sense of his responsibilities. It is significant that his predecessor outlived him!² In this reign we read of factories, minting, famine relief,³ and the introduction of regular taxes (*thathameda*) in place of the old ruinous system. Such benevolence however did not save the officials from being “spread-eagled in the sun near the Police Court” when one day the palace took fire. In spite of this lapse we leave Mindon with regret, and, his body hardly cold, turn to the tragic opening of Thibaw’s reign. The events are too recent to need description. There are many alive who remember them, including at least one of the principal actors. A huge trench was dug to accommodate the late King’s relatives. There are said to have been 76 victims. Many were tossed in half alive, only stunned by the clubs of the executioners. Two days later the very earth rose in protest, and the “palace elephants were sent to trample it level again.” No less tragic is the fate of Thibaw’s unfortunate lover Mi Hkin Gyi, who was lightly sacrificed to the Queen’s jealousy.

A less celebrated incident of Thibaw’s reign is the prison massacre of 1884 when all the prisoners in Mandalay were murdered, and those surviving burnt alive in their chains within the gaol.

¹ Gazetteer of Upper Burma Part 1, Vol. I, Pages 29 and 81.

² Gazetteer of Upper Burma, Part 1, Vol. I, Pages 36 and 81.

³ Gazetteer of Upper Burma, Part I, Vol I, Page 73.

Such wholesale misery was not confined to the inmates of the palace. The public at large suffered indiscriminately. We cannot do more here than recall the total extinction of the Talaing nation, the subjection of the Karens, the decimation of Arakan and Tavoy, and the ruin of the Shan States which to this day have a population of only 23 to the square mile !

It can hardly be doubted but that a streak of madness ran in the House of Alaungpra, accentuated perhaps by the marriage of half-brothers and half-sisters. Ba-gyi-daw was a complete lunatic for the last 6 or 7 years of his life. Tharrawaddy Min was noted in youth for his charming manners, till later in life he turned ferocious. Supayalat herself has been mad, and her mother, who was responsible for the massacre, was of such a character that we can scarcely regard her as sane.

Apart from jealousy, Supayalat had many redeeming points. She was kind, and even generous. Her manner could be charming. She drew people to her, and she was a good friend. But supreme authority, and complete ignorance of any power beyond her own, unbalanced her ; while fear lest any woman should tamper with Thibaw, whom she passionately loved, induced a ferocity that knew no limits.

The history of the Denegris throws an interesting side-light on the Court life of Thibaw and Supayalat. Old Monsieur Denegri was a silk weaver. It was he

who taught the Burmese how to make velvet. Late in life he brought his son Louis and his daughter Maria to Mandalay, where Mlle. Denegri, now 84 years old, still survives. Louis, who died some years ago, was Art Adviser to the Queen for whose Court he paraded costumes, flowers and ornaments, and executed the orders in France. One of these transactions produced serious trouble when a draft for 50,000 francs was lost in a bank smash. Thibaw was furious, and Louis' life was certainly in danger till Maria and the Lady Superior of the convent pleaded with Supayalat. Maria was a great favourite with the Queen who was taken with her transparent honesty. She often laughed at her critical comments saying :—" Oh Maria ! you really mustn't speak to Us so straight. Your talk must be round about." An amusing incident occurred at a certain *gadaw* when Maria, like everyone else, attended with a gift. Her present was sausages. Now the offering of food, with its possibilities of poison, was absolutely forbidden, and might easily have resulted in her being cut down. Fortunately, the contents of her silver bowl were only discovered at the gate where Thibaw and Supayalat could intervene from their Lily Throne, when Maria was seized by the guard. After considerable commotion, in which Maria vehemently resented the insinuation, and loudly proclaimed the perfection of her sausages, the King and Queen each ate half a one on their throne, and then presented Maria Denegri with two rings worth Rs. 4,000. Thibaw

had temptation never come, would no doubt have lived a good fellow.

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The florid style of the architecture of the Alaungpra dynasty is not without merit. It expressed itself in large shrines like the Patho-daw-gyi (Pāgan Min 1850) and the Kyauk-daw-gyi at Amarapura, and the Ok Kyaung (Ba-gyi-daw Min 1819) at Ava. It displays a certain noble extravagance in wide courts, deep colonnades and splendid gates. Its structure however is rotten. Bad bricks, bad mortar, and shoddy work, have brought these monuments to ruin long before the 11th and 15th century buildings of Pāgan. Vast masses of masonry are stupidly supported on timber beams. Stout walls are found sometimes to consist of wood with a layer of brick *nailed on* ! A litter of ruin bespeaks an inherent decadence : and the dreadful *zāyats*, or halls, which continue still to be crowded into the pagoda courts, show that to-day not even a sense of fitness or proportion survives.

European influence is strongly evident in the 19th century monuments of Amarapura where, in the east entrance of the Kyauk-daw-gyi, there are two winged angels with a harp in the painted frescoe of the arch. These lightly draped figures have European hair and somewhat heavy Italian faces, and were certainly designed by some foreign resident at the Burmese capital. The draped urns and floral ornaments on many beautiful buildings are borrowed from British cemeteries.

when cemeteries were at their worst. There are winged cherubs over the door of the Paya Ni, and the wooden gate itself is carved with stags and eagles straight from an heraldic plate. Needless to say these things, however fine, are utterly inappropriate.

The most curious experiment of all at Amarapura is a true lion at the base of one of the pagodas in place of the usual stylized *chinté*. It is the only one I have ever seen in Burma. One cannot but connect it with the caged lion, that was sent to the capital in 1824 by the Imam of Muscat, and which no doubt served as a model. That lion, whose extraordinary story is told on page 262 of *A Burmese Enchantment*, is not the only beast to take its place in the history of this period. A little earlier, in 1795, the Emperor of China expressed extreme curiosity to see a rhinoceros and an alligator. A request for a consignment thereof created considerable excitement in Burma. The exhortations of Bodaw Paya and his whole Government could not charm a rhinoceros to board a vessel, but a boat-load of alligators was duly shipped.¹

Amarapura with its splendid trees, quiet pagodas and enchanting views across the Taungthaman Lake, is one of those fascinating nooks unspoiled as yet by the disturbing influence of our age. Mail trains roar past to Rangoon and Mandalay, but eternal repose pervades the court of the Patho-daw-gyi, where I spend quiet Sundays picnicing beneath the tamarinds.

¹ Symes. *Embassy to Ava*. Page 221.

Amarapura belongs to a period starting with Bodaw Paya (1781 A.D.), extending through the reigns of Ba-gyi-daw (1819); Tharrawaddy Min (1837) and Pagan Min (1846), and ending with the transfer to Mandalay by Mindon Min in 1857. Swift decay has overtaken this capital. Lizards bask on the palace walls of Kings, and cattle rest at noon in their tombs. I have little sentiment for those princes. The golden halls of Mandalay, where now owls chuckle in the eaves at dusk, are haunted for me by unutterable hates and wickedness. Nevertheless, my antiquarian sense is outraged by the jaggery mill that, in defiance of the protective law, invaded the palace grounds of Amarapura in 1921. Thousands of bricks from the city wall have been ground up to make roads for a distillery. To me it is sacrilege, for the sanctity of ruins is a matter of real importance. The past is dead and gone, but heaps of rubbish may yet restore it with marvellous detail, and stones may wring a heart-beat from the very dust.

The coolies from the mill had even broken into Tharrawaddy's tomb. The jungle they had cut was still fresh when I saw it, and a hole gaped in the base of the monument.

Mindon whose grave is in Mandalay, and Alaungpra whose remains were brought back to Shwebo,¹ are probably the only Kings who were buried. The rest were burnt, and their ashes thrown into the Irrawaddy. Their so-called 'tombs' are merely monuments to mark

¹ See *A Burmese Enchantment*, Page 223.

the site of cremation. The monuments of Bodaw Paya, Ba-gyi-daw, Tharrawaddy (Shwebo Min), and of the mother of Mindon, are all situated in Amarapura.

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Sagaing and Ava are within sight of Amarapura. Commander Vibart, Marine Transport Officer, having kindly placed the steamer *Search* at our disposal, we may resume our leisurely exploration of the river in comfort, stopping first near an alluring clump of mangoes at Sagaing. The view from the Sagaing hills is lovely. At one's feet lie secluded ravines crowded with monasteries. These are valleys of repose. The design of the new buildings is excruciating, but they are toned down by the faultless beauty of older shrines. Peepul and tamarind trees cast slumberous shadows into the courts of Pagodas. The Gold Mohur blaze with scarlet bloom; and on the stony slopes above, the dainty white blossom of *Tayok-zāga* is in full beauty. From a bench on the Pagoda-crowned hills we look down upon the Irrawaddy—now brim full—and beyond to the trees of Ava and Amarapura where white spires rise from the foliage. Beyond again, the Golden Arakan shines in the afternoon sunshine: and behind all rise Mandalay Hill, the green uplands of Maymyo, and the quaint cliffs of Rat-nose Peak. Few scenes are more lovely. In the monsoon few are more softly hued. Ever-shifting light and shade travels over the mountains, and here and there a blur of rain passes across the fair panorama.

The Kaung Hmu Daw (*Good Royal Deed*) lies out in quiet country, 6 miles from Sagaing—a swelling white dome rising high above the surrounding trees. Elsewhere I have done it injustice in calling it the least beautiful Pagoda in Burma. I have since chosen it for several week-end pic-nics, and pleasant associations and closer acquaintance have changed my views. In itself, it is simply a vast but shapely hemisphere, slightly elongated, and without spire. But this gigantic swelling globe is but the culminating point of tripple enclosures, small lions and low, slender gates, whose restraint and lightness set off the main building to great advantage. Its beauty grows. Of the outer gates, only the two on the east face remain. They, and the curious row of tall stone lanterns which encircle the shrine, are certainly derived from Anarudapura (Ceylon), and through that from the gates and rails of ancient Buddhist stupas in India. Looked at from its base, the belling hemisphere of mottled plaster is strongly suggestive of a photo of the moon.

Amongst its marble curiosities are some grotesque statuettes near the monastery at the west entrance, a fine standing Buddha in a ruin outside the north-east corner of the walls, and an inscription about 7 feet high covered with beautiful archaic letters—the most remarkable tablet I have seen, both as regards execution and preservation. The Kaung Hmu Daw was built in 1636 A.D., by Thado Dhamma Yaza to commemorate the re-establishment of the capital at Ava. The inscription

records the extent of the Burmese Kingdom of those days, and includes, besides Burma proper,—Zimmé, the Shan States of Yawngghwe, Moné, and Keng Tung, and Taungthut in Chindwin. The Burmese called attention to this stone when Taungthut came under discussion at the Treaty of Yandabo.

* * * * *

The seductive lines of the Ok Kyaung at Ava invite another landing. The *Ok Kyaung*, as its name implies, is a brick monastery—a thing in itself somewhat rare. It is also a wooden type produced in brick, and in this style the Burmese excel. The monument is a perfect marvel of graceful curves, up-thrown gables, and splendid stairs. Of its kind, it is one of the most beautiful gems in Burma. This exquisite monastery was built in 1818-19 by Nan-madaw Menu, the fierce queen of Ba-gyi-daw, and restored after the earthquake of 1838-39 by her even more sinister daughter Hsin-byu-ma-shin who perpetrated the Mandalay massacre. Hsin-byu-ma-shin was the mother of Supayalat, and mother-in-law of Thibaw.

Ava was founded in 1364 during the confused period of Shan principalities, but was soon abandoned. It again became the capital in 1636, when Thado Dhamma Yaza built the Kaung Hmu Daw Pagoda at Sagaing to commemorate the event.¹ In 1760, after Alaungpra's death, the succession of Naung-daw-gyi was disputed by one of the late King's generals, Nuttoon, who was

¹ Upper Burma Gazetteer, Part II. Vol. I, Page 339.

besieged in Ava for 7 months before his rebellion was crushed. Naung-daw-gyi moved the capital from Shwebo to Sagaing, but died in 1763. His infant son and heir Maung Maung was hustled into a monastery, and the late King's brother Sin-byu-shin succeeded and moved the capital first back to Shwebo, and then to Ava. The old city was then in ruins, being much damaged by the late siege. It was now rebuilt, strengthened, and adorned with many pagodas and monasteries. Sin-byu-shin was a man of austere character, who made several efforts to stop animal slaughter and the use of spirits. His son Singu Min who succeeded in 1775 was the very reverse—a drunken profligate, whose brief reign of six years has fastened tragedy upon Ava which I cannot but recall each time I visit the stately trees which now mark the palace site. Singu Min had married a girl “endowed with virtue, beauty and accomplishments,” but with whom he lived in constant discord. One day in a passion the King accused her of infidelity—and what happened may be told in Major Syme's own words which were written in 1800, only twenty years after the event.¹

“The trembling and innocent victim was dragged from the palace, and enclosed in a sack of scarlet cloth richly ornamented. Thus confined, she was put on board a boat, when the sack being suspended between the narrow necks of two earthen jars, the whole was sunk in the deepest part of the Irrawaddy. This

¹ Syme's *Embassy to Ava*, Page 91.

diabolical act was perpetrated in open day before thousands of spectators, amongst whom were many of her friends and relations. Her afflicted father, overwhelmed with anguish, retired in despair to the city of Chagaing" (Sagaing).

Such horrors resulted in a plot to bring prince Maung Maung from his monastery, though it is unlikely that Bodaw Paya, who was a party to it, ever meant the boy to succeed. At any rate the palace was siezed while Singu Min was away at a festival, and Maung Maung installed. It is an old Burmese superstition that whoever holds the palace is King, and events in this case proved its accuracy. Singu Min returned to Sagaing, but found himself deserted. A curious incident now occurred. Sagaing and Ava are close together, facing each other across the Irrawaddy. Early in the morning Singu Min entered a boat with only two servants and rowed across to his lost capital at Ava. The sentries, astounded by his appearance, let him pass; and crowds of curious people made way for him. There is no saying what this audacity might not have achieved, had not Singu Min had the misfortune to meet his father-in-law at the palace gate. This is the unfortunate man of whose anguish we have read as he saw his daughter drowned before his eyes. Seizing a sword he struck Singu Min down. Bodaw Paya now threw aside all disguise and assumed the throne. Maung Maung was also sunk between two jars in the river, thus closing his tragic reign of eleven days. This was in 1782.

Bodaw Paya transferred the capital to Amarapura. We have already seen Father Sangermano's account of the "fatigues, exactions and oppressions" entailed. However it must be noted that Major Symes describing Amarapura says that it became in a short time "one of the most flourishing and well built cities of the east."

Yandabo, where the treaty was signed in 1826 after the First Burmese War, is some miles below Ava. We had difficulty in locating it, and the *Thugyi* Maung Po Maung appeared to be the only man who knew where the treaty was made. We found that the peepul tree, beneath which the signatures took place, had been burnt down many years ago. No trace remains of it, but its site was pointed out at 6 paces from the steps in the outer wall of the Paw-daw-mu Pagoda, and on the north-west face of it. A few yards away, near the north-east wall of the Pagoda, the *Thugyi* showed us a place where there had once been an inscribed stone, presumably a record of the treaty. The stone has now disappeared, but the *Thugyi* himself remembered seeing it as a boy. It stood beside what was formerly a road, but the site is now enclosed within the fence of a monastery. The Pagoda wall has since been moved out a few paces, and it is probable that the stone, now sunk into the ground, lies either just outside the wall, or under the pavement of the court within. An excavation made as the result of my visit was unsuccessful.

As we waited here on the bank a man landed from a sampan, and immediately fell among thieves. The robber was a strong, handsome, humorous Burman, who seized half the goods that the traveller had gone to purchase. A long struggle ensued with furious protests on one side, and increasing wit and laughter on the other. Somehow we all sympathized with the funny thief whose dacoity was effected with perfect good-will. Though his jokes only incensed his victim, he lifted half his property in the nicest way imaginable; the trader losing our last grain of sympathy by his ungracious acceptance of the other's thanks, and his refusal to allow him to help carry away what was left of the goods.



ARMOUR OF MAHA BANDULA.

CHAPTER XVI.

BANDULA—A BURMESE SOLDIER.

THE raising of Burmese Units during the Great War has naturally led to much interesting speculation as to the value of the Burman as a soldier. Except on one occasion, when the Burma Sappers and Miners distinguished themselves at the Tigris Crossing, the late war unfortunately affords no opportunities for judging them in the actual crisis of battle. The student of history cannot, however, be in doubt as to the courage and élan which for centuries have won the Burmese pre-eminence in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. But the public memory is proverbially short. It is almost forgotten that formerly the Burmese were regarded as *born soldiers*, that they lived in an atmosphere of constant warfare, and that they usually won. The collapse of the Army in 1885, without striking a blow, and the failure of half-hearted attempts at various times to form units, have raised doubts which the general characteristics of the race aggravate. In the past the Burman has always been a tough soldier in spite of bad pay, bad equipment and abominable leadership. Their military officers were chiefly notable for offensive arrogance and swagger; and the soldier himself appears to have left his virtues at home, and in war spread terror not only amongst the enemy, but

amongst his own countrymen upon whom, in defeat, he turned as a marauder. These, however, are matters of discipline. They are the faults of all semi-civilized soldiery : and they do not necessarily reflect on the fighting qualities of the race.

Let us therefore attempt to revive the personality of a great Burmese soldier whose history is now considerably obscured, but whose name is still universally remembered and cherished throughout the country. Maung Yit, or as he is popularly called Bandula, was born at the village of Tapāyin in Lower Chindwin, a district which ever supplied Burmese Governments with their best soldiers. Of his early history we have few details. We see him plainly only at the close of his career. His reputation was already made in Assam and Arakan, nor did final disaster completely destroy it. A grateful King—and Kings are not usually grateful to defeated generals—raised a pagoda in his memory. His armour is still exhibited in the British Museum : and in 1918, ninety-three years after his death, a subscription was raised, and the site of his fall marked by a stone pillar inscribed :— Mahabandula Min was struck by a piece of shell (*bonzan*) on 1st April 1825; and was mortally injured dying almost immediately.

At the outbreak of the First Burmese War, Bandula commanded the Burmese Army in Arakan which contemplated the invasion of Bengal, and caused no small anxiety in Calcutta. The unexpected appearanc

of the British Force at Rangoon under Sir Archibald Campbell destroyed all hope of an invasion of Bengal. The position of the British, however, was critical. Burmese levies attacked and invested them with unquenchable energy, and General after General came from Ava to spoil his reputation. The rains had broken. Stores, cattle and boats were removed, and the civil population driven off with such remorseless consistency that the British lay isolated and immobilized round the Shwe Dagon Pagoda from the 10th May, 1824, to the 13th February, 1825, without moving out of it. The sickness amongst our troops was appalling. In the first year $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the men were killed in action, and 45 per cent. perished of disease! The total losses during the war amounted to $72\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the troops engaged. Finally, the Home Government was getting distinctly peevish.¹

At this moment Bandula was transferred to command the Burmese Army before Rangoon. His withdrawal from Arakan was so swift and secret that our posts watching him there were unaware of his departure. He removed all his sick, and left no trace of his route. In spite of the season, his troops marched rapidly by many different roads through Hsinbyu Gyun and Prome to a rendezvous with Bandula at Danubyu where, with the levies already engaged with the British, he had an Army of 60,000 men, of whom, it is estimated, 35,000 had muskets. Swiftly, fore-

¹ Fytche. *Burma Past and Present*. Pages 81 and 82.

thought and energy marked all his measures, in sharp contrast to the leisurely methods of his astrologer-ridden predecessors. From this point we will let Major Snodgrass, Military Secretary to the Expedition, speak, and record in the words of an actual eye-witness the character of Burmese soldiers in general, and of Bandula in particular¹. On the 30th November (1824), Bandula's Army closed in on the British position round the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. The country was then covered with jungle, and Kemmendine was the preliminary key to the British position from which not only could the Pagoda be assaulted, but fire-rafts let loose on the fleet with certainty of success. The faces of the Pagoda were closely invested, and the river front on the Dalla side held. Thus on the 1st of December, says Major Snodgrass, "we found ourselves completely surrounded with only the limited space within our lines that we could still call our own. The line of circumvallation taken up by the enemy, obviously extended a very considerable distance, and divided as it was by the river, injudiciously weakened his means of assailing us on any particular point; but as far as celerity, order and regularity are concerned, the style in which the different corps took up their stations in the line, reflected much credit on the arrangement of the Burmese Commander. When this singular and presumptuous formation was completed, the soldiers of the left columns laying aside their spears and

¹ *Narrative of the Burmese War.* Snodgrass, Pages 96 to 177

muskets, commenced operations with their entrenching tools, with such activity and good-will, that in the course of a couple of hours their line had wholly disappeared, and could only be traced by a parapet of new earth gradually increasing in height. The moving masses, which had so very lately attracted our anxious attention, had sunk into the ground; and by one who had not witnessed the whole scene, the existence of these subterranean legions would not have been credited—and to us who had watched, it seemed the work of magic and enchantment.”

The Military Secretary to the British Expedition is clearly astonished at these tactics. When it is remembered that Bandula was faced with a strongly posted enemy, whose only superiority lay in its arms and artillery, the genius of the man is—to us twentieth century beings—obvious. Bandula, who as we shall see, used *frightfulness*, and skilful *propaganda*, was evidently well in advance of his day. We can easily understand why Burma of those days extended from Assam and Manipur to Siam.

At this juncture, however, the British paid a visit to these excavations. “The trenches were found to be a succession of holes, capable of containing two men each, and excavated, so as to afford shelter, both from the weather and the fire of the enemy: even a shell lighting in the trench could at most but kill two men. As it is not the Burmese system to relieve their troops in making these approaches, each hole contained a

sufficient supply of rice, water, and even fuel for its inmates : and under the excavated bank a bed of straw or brushwood was prepared, in which one man could sleep while his comrade watched. When one line of trench is completed, its occupiers, taking advantage of the night, push forward to where the second is to be opened, their place being immediately taken up by fresh troops from the rear, and so on progressively."

Meanwhile fierce assaults were delivered on Kemmendine again and again throughout the day. At night the Burmese attack was resumed. "Suddenly the heavens and the whole surrounding country became brilliantly illuminated by the flames of several tremendous fire-rafts, floating down the river towards Rangoon ; and scarcely had the blaze appeared, than incessant rolls of musketry and peals of cannon were heard from Kemmendine. The enemy had launched their fire-rafts into the stream with the first of the ebb tide : and they were followed up by War-boats ready to take advantage of the confusion which might ensue, should any of the ships be set on fire." Our sailors immediately took to their boats and grappled with the flaming rafts, conducting them safely past. "The situation of the vessels" was, however, "extremely perilous. The cruiser *Teignmouth* caught fire and was with difficulty extinguished." These rafts were "made of bamboo firmly wrought together, between every two or three rows of which a line of earthen jars filled with petroleum, or earth-oil and cotton, were secured..... The

almost unextinguishable fierceness of the flames proceeding from them can scarcely be imagined. Many of these rafts were 200 feet in length and divided by long hinges, so arranged that when they caught upon the cable of any ship, the force of the current should carry the ends of the raft completely round her and envelop her in flames from the deck to her main-topmast head. With the possession of Kemmendine the enemy could have launched these rafts from a point where they must have reached our shipping."

The Burmese attack continued through the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of December. The fighting was desperate. "At Kemmendine peace was seldom maintained above two hours at any time." The Burmese were now close in round the position. On the 5th the British delivered their first telling counter attack on the Burmese left towards Pazundaung. Bandula spent the 6th rallying his left, but on the 7th a second, final, and smashing stroke was delivered north of the Pagoda: and on the same night the force across the river at Dalla was smitten. The Burmese, under this quick succession of blows, broke—with the inevitable consequences. "Numerous desertions, and even the dispersion of entire corps followed. On the 9th Bandula with a remnant of 25,000 was retiring on Danubyu" where his own fore-thought had provided a fortified position and reinforcements. To delay pursuit, he invented an 'Envoy from Ava' who in fact never existed. With the returning population he introduced

his own agents into Rangoon, who, on the 12th December managed to burn down half the town. The Magazines were only saved by luck. With a trifle of fortune Bandula might well have equalized his losses.

The British, however, were in no position to follow. Bandula kept them starved and isolated. On the 13th of February the British transport crawled forth at the rate of four, five and six miles a day. "Too much credit cannot be given to Bandula and his chiefs, for the secrecy they maintained and enforced, relative to their plans, arrangements and movements at the present juncture. The state of espionage and terror under which the peasantry are kept renders them extremely circumspect..... The desertion of the towns and villages in our route was obviously a systematical arrangement of the Burman chiefs..... The Prince of Sarrawaddy, burning and laying waste the villages in their route, drove thousands of helpless, harmless people from their homes to the woods..... Even Russia, in her memorable resistance to the armies of Napoleon, did not offer the invading host such a continued scene of desolation. Neither man nor beast escaped the retiring columns : and heaps of ashes, with groups of hungry, howling dogs, alone indicated where villages had been."

The Flotilla's attack on the stockades at Danubyu failed. The land-column turned to it, arriving before the position on about 25th March. The stockade was strong, but Bandula's army was probably not more

than 15,000. The bombardment began on the 1st April, when a stray shot killed Bandula as he was inspecting the works. The soldiers could be induced to serve under no other General, and in the night melted away. The drama then shifted up the river to Prome, and so to Pagan and Yandabo, where the Burmese Court was at last obliged to sign the treaty.

Of Bandula's personality we know little. That he wielded an almost magical influence over his men is beyond dispute. His mere presence inspired confidence, and was worth a corps. At his fall the brave army he had handled so skilfully in the face of European science, vanished. No doubt he was ruthless and ferocious in anger. When some gunners refused to serve their guns, he stepped down and personally cut off their heads. Fytche¹ mentions that on one occasion Bandula ordered an offending General to be "sawn asunder between two planks." By such means alone could an army like his be managed, or at least it is charitable to think so. The Burman has a streak of Tartar cruelty in his nature. On the other hand Bandula was normally generous and brave. He possessed the genius of a soldier. He was greatly beloved. His memory is cherished to this day, and recalled with pride. That the confidence he inspired was justified is obvious from the remarkable accuracy, detail and precision of his moves and dispositions. His troops reached their positions

¹ *Burma Past and Present*. Page 80.

punctually, and were there supplied with such tools, engines, necessities and comforts as were possible.

Until 1824, Bandula had been uniformly successful. He was summoned to Rangoon in an hour of dire calamity. There, for the first time, he met European troops, and there seems to be little doubt but that he recognized the hopelessness of his task during that disastrous week before the Shwe Dagon. The iron of defeat and disgrace had entered his soul, though he showed once more a brave front at Danubyu.

There, it appears, he deliberately courted death. He refused to shelter from bombardment, or to lower his state umbrella : for, said he :—" If I die, the enemy will attribute their victory to that. They cannot say our soldiers are not brave."



Kale Bo

CHAPTER XVII.

A BURMESE MILITARY VENTURE.

WE will now examine the modern Burmese soldier, and mark the steps of his progress since his recent entry into our Army. The nation is roughly eight million strong: a highly sensitive wayward people who require more careful handling than any of the other races of Burma. Their language is extremely difficult, and their enrolment as soldiers began late in the war by which time most of the Burmese-speaking Europeans who might have officered them were scattered over the world. After being neglected as soldiers for thirty years since annexation, Burmans were raised hurriedly in 1917 and at a critical moment. These were facts that made the venture a little difficult at first.

A perfect recruiting system cannot be set up all at once in the confusion of a war. Burmese recruiting was unfortunate at the outset. Bad characters were pushed wholesale out of towns and villages into the Army. This, in Burmese times, was a recognized way of recruiting. Now there is no one more incorrigible than a bad Burman, and no one more ready to turn the weak points of a situation to his own advantage. The desertions and general misbehaviour of these scaliwags gave people who had always deprecated local

recruiting, a stick with which to beat the Burman. They beat him with it still, though he has long since proved himself a soldier of high quality. It is therefore only fair to state clearly the cruel difficulties of Burmese recruiting at the outset—difficulties for which the Burmese themselves were largely responsible, but which arose from their excessive zeal as recruiters. Their desire to recruit, and at the same time to rid the Districts of riffraff, resulted in bad characters being even faced with the option of enlistment or prosecution for ancient crimes. Many a jail-bird was thus disposed of, who, when he had pocketed his bonus, deserted. The most pernicious growth of all, and one which had the worst influence upon recruiting, was a system of secret purchase devised and encouraged by these same deserters. It arose from the competition of one District with another. To ensure exemption, villagers subscribed to buy substitutes. A bad character could sell himself for Rs. 300. Prices paid are said to have been based on the old Burmese scale of compensation for killing—on the assumption, I suppose, that a soldier is as good as dead. The victim, however, had no such delusion. Teach the crocodile how to swim! By deserting and repeatedly reselling himself elsewhere, he could live in blissful ease and affluence. Such an organization is secret, difficult to detect or prove, and still more difficult to eradicate, especially in a country like Burma where there is little public opinion to condemn and expose such proceedings.

The results of this sort of thing may be imagined. It is absurd to judge the Burmese soldier of to-day by the disastrous results of a bad start, in which he alone of all the various indigenous races was a victim. Kachins, Karens and Shans were all much better recruited. The Karens had their Missionaries, as well as eminent men of their own race like the Hon'ble San C. Po, and U. Myat Nyen (President of the Bassein Branch of the Karen National Association) to look after them. The Shans were raised by the efforts of Mr. Stirling and Mr. Grose through the agency of *Sawbwas*, or Chiefs. The Kachins came through the Military Police and were, of course, supported by Mr. Scott and his Bhamo Hills.

The zeal with which many Burmans recruited for the Army during the war is not to be generally condemned just because sometimes it was misdirected, or because some were mere Scalp Hunters (at Rs. 10 per scalp). Burmans, obscure and eminent, worked hard because they were filled with a great desire to create a Burmese Army. The whole project would undoubtedly have failed but for their sustained and earnest co-operation. They realized that the non-existence of Burmese soldiers was a national disgrace (though one for which they were not responsible): that without military efficiency the country could not hope for political progress. They were out for numbers, but did not see that Armies are no longer drawn from the scum of the population. Speeches were made exhorting

the undesirable to take this opportunity of removing themselves elsewhere. The mistake, in a people new to the idea of voluntary recruiting, was natural enough. In Burmese times the procedure was somewhat different. There was conscription, and petty officials "raised double the number of men demanded, and allowed one-half to buy their discharge"¹.

When we see, as we do now, better class Burmese putting their sons into the Army, it means that soldiering is better understood. The effort as a whole therefore indicates the awakening of public spirit, and is a sign of a Burmese enlightenment. We have passed the period of initial mistakes, though there is yet room for improvement in the class of recruit enlisted. This can best be effected by recruiting less in the big towns and more in the country. Town recruiting could only have been justified in a crisis like that in which the Burmese Battalions were raised. Apart from every other consideration, more than two-thirds of the population is agricultural.

After the Armistice, when I assumed direction, recruiting passed through a stage of transition from the wholesale methods of war to the more deliberate methods of peace. Even then new units had still to be raised—such as Motor Transport Companies for service in Afghanistan. Large reinforcements were required for Mesopotamia, and men originally enlisted on a war engagement had to be replaced by men on a permanent

¹ Snodgrass. *The Burmese War*. Page 200.

'four-year' engagement. This was a work second in magnitude only to the initial raising. It will be some time yet before ordinary recruiting by parties can be relied on. That is a slow method, but of course it has overwhelming advantages. By recruiting through their own men, units are able to build up a territorial connection, and can be certain of procuring a good class of recruit. Burmese Officers and N. C. Os. can only be expected to control their companies and sections if they have had a voice in their recruiting. But it is impossible for units to recruit for themselves so long as their requirements are enormous. At first, recruiting by parties was not successful; but the difficulties are rectifying themselves, though there are special obstacles to surmount in a country where soldiering is a new experiment. For one thing parties, unless frequently met, are apt to lose their recruits, and the staff is not sufficiently large for a country which is bigger than France, and whose population is only 45 to the square mile. Burma has an area of about 238,700 square miles and is therefore greater by thirty thousand square miles than even the German Empire before the war. In spite of its agricultural, forest and mineral wealth, it has a smaller average population than any part of India except the deserts of Baluchistan! We have to recruit all over this wide and thinly populated area. Communications are bad. For instance, important districts like Pyinmana and Magwe have respectively only 10 and 6 miles of metalled roads. The remaining roads

are mere inter-village tracks. Existing roads are in disrepair, and will probably take some years to put in order. Motor roads occur, but they are few and unconnected. Railways average only one mile of line to every 144 square miles of country! (In India there is one mile of line to each 35 square miles). These are conditions that effect recruiting profoundly, for, not only is it difficult to get about, but a large part of the population remains isolated, ignorant and shy.

For all these reasons recruiting of Burmese still depends largely for success upon the good-will of small local officials, and in the case of the Karens upon Missionaries and Karen Elders. Without their encouragement simple villagers, who are of course the very type we wish to get at, will not come forward. Non-commissioned Officers and men have little weight with petty officials, and consequently recruit badly. Influential Burmese and Karen officers however carry more weight, and are therefore better recruiters than the rank and file. This is unsatisfactory, but we shall have to recognize it until recruiting is better understood, and until the demand for men becomes normal. Then things will rectify themselves automatically. These conditions refer only to Burmese and Karens. Kachins, Chins and Shans all recruit satisfactorily through recruiting parties: but theirs' is another story with which we are not concerned here.

A separate recruiting method is necessary for almost every district in Burma. Authority in each

case rests with a different class, according to the varied traits of the people. Amongst independent Kachins authority is vested in no one at all. The *Duwa* is a nonentity, and the *Salang*, only of local importance. In the Shan States the *Sawbwas*, or local Princes, are all-powerful. Amongst the Burmese, who are slow to co-operate, power passes exclusively into the hands of Government Officials: while amongst Karens, who have reduced racial co-operation to an art, officials are of little consequence, and real power lies with Pastors, Missionaries and Elders, who have a solid flock behind them, of whose interests they are intensely jealous. Any system of administration must be sufficiently elastic to cope with these various circumstances. Local conditions have to be carefully and sympathetically studied, and procedure adjusted to meet them.

Suitable seasons for recruiting also vary in different parts of the country. In the Kachin and Chin Hills it is almost impossible to travel in the rains. In Lower Burma the people plough from June to August, and reap from December to February. There is a slack season, suitable for recruiting, from September to November; and a season of merry festivals from March to May. The fact that ploughers and planters are not paid off until after the reaping has, however, to be considered.

Upper Burma, especially districts like Shwebo, Monywa and Sagaing, has always supplied the material

for Burmese Armies.¹ The inhabitants of Upper Burma are supposed to make the best soldiers, but as a matter of fact those of Lower Burma are equally spirited. They are also better educated, and education counts for a good deal in these days. Besides this, the grandfathers of many recruits from Tharrawaddy and the Delta were themselves natives of Upper Burma who, because they had exceptional grit and enterprise, migrated into British territory in Burmese times. Lower Burma being better educated, recruits more freely. Consequently more recruiting is done in Lower than in Upper Burma. This will be rectified no doubt when times become normal.

In Upper Burma the Burmese are more or less unmixed. That is the real home of the race. In the Delta, Rangoon, Pegu and Moulmein they are diluted with Karens and Talaings. The divisions are nowhere well-defined, because the population has flowed into Lower Burma as conquerors or immigrants, or has been driven there after disastrous wars.

Both Karens and Burmese enlist in large numbers in Rangoon, Tharrawaddy, Prome and Bassein.² Henzada is now the most thickly-populated area in Burma. The Burmans in these districts are rather turbulent; and Tharrawaddy, Henzada and Prome compete with each other for the first place in the crime statistics of the Empire. It is however claimed, and

¹ Map Square. C.J.

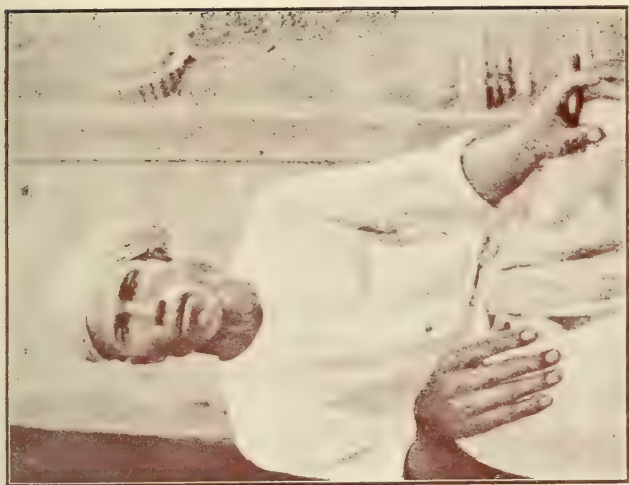
² Map Squares C.L. and C.M.

probably with truth, that Burma's unenviable record in this respect would appear less abnormal if crime was 'reported' as rigorously in other countries. Recruiting efforts made during the war are already bearing fruit. Areas wisely encouraged then are recruiting freely now. There is all the difference in the world between *pressure* and *persuasion*. We require all the persuasion possible : for we must believe that discipline and restraint taught in the Army will not be without effect upon the Burmese character, which needs cultivation in those very qualities.

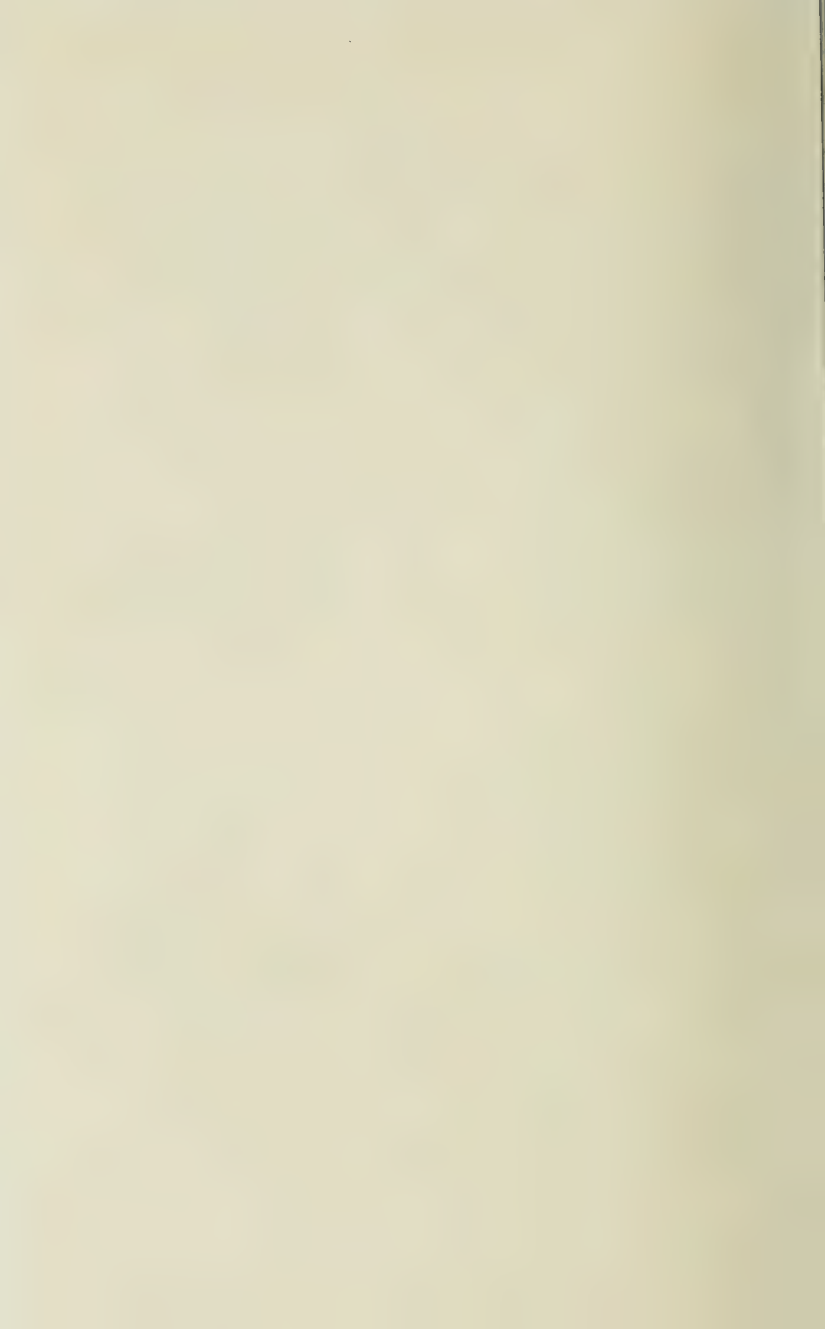
The characteristics of the Burmese have, naturally, a very important bearing on their service. They are an impulsive, light-hearted, but passionate people, fond of amusements, plays, games and dress. They hate routine, but are nevertheless capable of sustained effort if they can see any necessity for it. If there is no apparent use in a work of drudgery, they simply won't do it. They are modest in some ways, and insufferably self-satisfied in others. They are inclined to treat other nations with aloofness, and consequently stand apart from their Karen, Kachin and Arakanese neighbours, whose languages they seldom bother to learn. The attitude of *Lu ma hoat bu : Kāla be* is inherent. They are cheery, witty and friendly, but liable to sudden gusts of anger ; and Satan finds plenty for them to do when idle. In youth they have oats to sow, and sow them liberally : but after all a dash of wickedness in a boy is not wholly undesirable, especially if he settles down—and Burmese usually do—to dignity later in life. The

Burmese pass through four distinct stages. As children they are utterly lovable. They are treated with kindness and indulgence. There are no separations, and schooling is got through without tears and without much discipline. Their early training and happy childhood have undoubtedly helped to cultivate their peculiar characteristics. At 17 they are insufferably bumptious and conceited. They grow up late, but in manhood acquire that commonsense, judgment, breeding, manner and *savoir faire* which distinguish them. In old age they take to religion and works of merit, and modify their tastes and dress, as befitting men for whom the vanities of life have no more attraction.

Unluckily for him, the Burman with his high standard of living cannot compete easily, even in his own country, with aliens. He and his wife must dress in silk, have a neat, clean little house, and spend a certain amount of money on cheroots and amusements. Nor does it seem desirable, especially in these democratic times, that he should do otherwise. That he should learn to compete with other people is obvious, of course. But it must be remembered that he is not protected by immigration laws. Under this disability the Burmese must always labour, until they have established themselves more extensively in those professions to which, in their own country, they would seem to have an overwhelming right of entry. Still, efficiency is intimately connected with wages. The best men of all nations are only attracted by suitable pay.



BURMESE.



As soldiers, the Burmese have plenty of initiative and readily develop powers of command. They have a proper pride of race, an intense love for their country, and are not given to aping foreign ways and dress. A Prussian discipline which ignores individuality is as intolerable to them as it is to us. As soldiers they are keen on work, and excel at anything mechanical such as Bombing, Lewis Gunning, and Signalling. They made a great reputation in Mesopotamia for skilful motor driving. They are not so good at marching and shooting which are dull work and require more application. By nature they are generous and debonair, incorrigible spendthrifts, reckless gamblers, and bad losers both in gambling and games. The Burmese character is a strange mixture of virtues and vices. Their virtues make them very lovable. Their faults are those of impulsive, but rather interesting, children, and are easily forgiven. Few orientals have such good friends and such violent enemies. Few are discussed as often, and few are as difficult to understand. They reveal themselves to people they like, but make no effort whatever to hide their very worst side from people they feel are unsympathetic. This, I suppose, is why such totally divergent opinions are held about them.

It is obvious that a people so wayward and high-spirited require special handling, but well repay the trouble of cultivating. That has been our experience in the Army. As the imperative necessity of routine

and discipline has become recognized, they have grown more and more amenable. It only requires the indefinable genius and enthusiasm of suitable officers to turn them into first class soldiers.

The statement, often made, that the Burmese have no military tradition, discloses the most woeful ignorance of history. Taking the last dynasty alone there were wars with Talaings in 1752, 73 and 74 : with the Chinese in 1767 : with Arakanese in 1783 : with Manipuris in 1753, 65, 74, and 1819 : with Siamese in 1760, 65, 71, 85 and 91 : and with the British in 1824, 52 and 85. These are only major wars entailing the despatch of large forces. They do not include rebellions and palace tiffs which, though they frequently upset Governments, did not seriously disturb the people. In most of these great wars the Burmese were successful, and in many they were the aggressors. It is in fact these frequent and remorseless struggles which (together with a high rate of infant mortality) account for the thinness of the population to-day in a land whose fertility, richness and climate render it one of the most desirable in the world. It is only *Pax Britannica* which has given the country a chance to recuperate. In Lower Burma the population has doubled and trebled itself since British occupation. Between 1901 and 1911 the population of the province as a whole increased by one-and-a-half millions.

There is in fact an all too long and tragic fighting tradition, but the memory of it has grown faint during the

one or more generations since annexation. We have learned now to regret our non-military policy in Burma, which has tended to degrade the people in their own eyes, and in the eyes of others. Nor must we forget the moral damage suffered by conquered nations such as those of Burma. The point is not sufficiently recognized. The Burmese especially, have lost their pride, their ideals, their initiative by the downfall of their native dynasty. They have only now begun to recover themselves. Recent military service has done much to rouse them, and I believe their national spirit and their interest in life will develop rapidly. The old stories stir them again. It is instructive to note the renewed interest of a Burmese crowd at recruit meetings when they are reminded of the deeds of Anawratta, Alaungpra, Bodaw Paya, Hsin Byu Shin, Tabin-Shweti, Bayin Naung, and Bandula.

The public memory is notoriously short. It is well to recall the opinions of those who knew the Burmese soldier as an almost irresistible power in his native element. Writing in 1800, Major Symes says :—“The Burmans may be called a nation of soldiers, every man being liable for military service. War is deemed the most honourable occupation.” In 1824 Major Snodgrass says : “Born a soldier, the Burman is accustomed from his earliest years to consider war and foreign conquest as his trade, and the plunder of countries he invades as the fair and legitimate reward of his toil.” The same writer describes him as arrogant

bold, daring, tireless and rapid in his movements. In defeat, Burmese soldiers scattered, turned into marauders, and soon became a menace to their own people.¹

The Burmese evidently had well defined ideas about strategy. We have little information on this subject: but the offensive campaigns of 1765 and 1783 against Siam and Arakan, and the defensive war of 1767 against China, all display the same strategic conception, namely, to overwhelm the enemy by a well-timed and unexpected concentration of two or more armies. In each of these three campaigns there was a small decoy force to engage the enemy, and a large one to smash him after he was thoroughly committed. This division of strength has obvious disadvantages, but a sustained run of luck confirmed the Burmese leaders in their policy. In Arakan the enemy was broken before a junction was effected. In Siam the concentration was slow, but in the end successful.

Against the Chinese in 1767 three Burmese armies concentrated to perfection after the Chinese were already engaged with one. The invaders, who were 50,000 strong, were utterly destroyed, and a most serious menace was removed.

Of their tactics we have said something in the last chapter.

The Burmese Army 120 years ago, in the time of Bodaw Paya, consisted of three arms:—Infantry, Cavalry (recruited in Manipur), and War Boats. Of

¹ Snodgrass. *The Burmese War*, Pages 204, 205, and 291

these, the War Boats were the most efficient. They were maintained by villages all up and down a thousand miles of river, and Bodaw Paya could command 500 at short notice. The boats were 80 to 100 feet long, and sometimes carried six or nine pounder guns. Alaungpra won his throne by two furious river battles at Kyauk Myaung and Prome.

Major Symes saw about 2,000 Infantry at a review at Amarapura in 1800. Large standing forces were not maintained. Armies could however be speedily raised, and in 1824 Bandula is estimated to have had 60,000 men in his attack on the British position at Shwe Dagon.

The recruitment and discipline, if crude and harsh, were at any rate effective. A proportional levy was made by districts. Every three or four houses supplied one recruit, or paid a fine of about £40 instead.¹ The recruit received arms and rations, but no pay: and his family was held responsible for his behaviour. "In cases of desertion, or treachery, the innocent wife, children or parents were dragged to execution without remorse or pity."²

This system hardly prepared the Burman for voluntary service. Half-hearted attempts were made at intervals after annexation to raise various units, but the difficulty has always been to find British Officers with experience of the people, and knowledge of some

¹ Symes' *Embassy to Ava*. Page 317.

² Symes' *Embassy to Ava*. Page 318.

of the half-dozen new languages involved. Until 1917, there was no necessity for Army Officers to take up Burmese languages, except as a hobby. Even Officers of the Burma Military Police had had very little to do with natives of the country. Had indigenous regiments been persevered with after annexation, as they should have been, we should not have come all unprepared to this undertaking at a critical moment of the war. The language question was, and is, a serious one. Burmese cannot be acquired in a few months. It takes years to learn properly : and though English-speaking Burmese Officers can bridge the difficulty for a time, it is nevertheless impossible for British Officers to take a sympathetic interest in their men, or to understand their needs and wants, without knowing their language.

What the Burmese have lately achieved in the face of all these difficulties is perfectly wonderful. It will be a pride and pleasure to all who have been associated with it. Burmese problems have been more serious than those of other indigenous races because they worked on a bigger scale. But in spite of all, they have found their feet. They have shown high qualities, and at one step have achieved a large military establishment, much of which will remain permanent. *A great tiger is known by his tracks.* There were during the war four Battalions of 70th Burma Rifles mainly composed of Burmese and Karens which served in India, Egypt and Mesopotamia. There were seven Companies of Burma Mechanical Transport, and a

Burmese and a Kachin Company in the 85th Burma Rifles who all served in Mesopotamia. Three companies of Kachins and one of Chins were for a time associated as a separate Battalion. A Chin and Burmese Labour Corps served in France. Lastly there were three companies of Sappers and Miners of which one distinguished itself at the Tigris Crossing. There has been a company of Burmese Sappers and Miners since 1887, but otherwise all the formations are new. It is no mean record for a country which before the war supplied practically no soldiers at all.

In the post-war organisation a Burman Group has been permanently retained composed of one Battalion of Burmans and Karens, one of Burmans and Shans, one of Kachins, and one of Chins. In addition there is a Training Battalion, and one company of Sappers.

One is amazed now that all this was not attempted long ago. The truth is that, through no fault of his own, the Burman has not in the past received that encouragement, training and attention to which his qualities entitle him. The fact that he lives in the South and wears silk, has encouraged a supposition that he is soft and effete. A greater mistake was never made! On the contrary he is distinctly a tough proposition. Where there is a row he will be in the middle of it, with the palings, or whatever comes first to his hand: and not neglecting, even in that wild moment, a few deft touches of disguise.

He is essentially a 'man,' though a wayward one, and is capable of a high sense of duty and efficiency. It is all a matter of taking him up and cultivating him.

A great deal depends still upon Burmese and Karen leaders and elders. A great responsibility rests with them, and there are many who recognize it. Their effort must be sustained. *The Guitar string must be neither tense nor slack.* Patriotism and love of adventure cannot make the same appeal to youth in peace as they do in war. The country therefore needs active encouragement until a military tradition and a taste for military employment have had time to grow strong and self-supporting. Further, a change of attitude towards military crime—particularly desertion—is desirable. Either from motives of pity, or because they fear that the infliction of pain will react on themselves through *Karma*, the Burmese public does not assist in bringing offenders to account. It is to be feared that crime of all kinds carries little stigma, and public opinion has not sufficient weight behind it to act as a deterrent. The Burmese are not unstable, but they lack direction, and direction in such matters must come from within, and manifest itself in stronger public opinion than at present exists.

Fortunately educated Burmese thoroughly appreciate their responsibilities. They have everywhere shown themselves eager to co-operate, and may be relied upon to continue to do so.



WHEN THE FRAGRANT AIR IS LADEN WITH THE ECHO OF A GONG.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DECLINE OF BUDDHISM.

IT is a maxim of Buddhism that nothing lasts for ever, not even Buddhism itself. The founder of this great Religion, foreseeing the development of man, considered that his teaching would suffice only 5,000 years, after which a new Buddha would re-state the Law in its relation to modern conditions. We have moved now through half the period. We have entered upon a crowded, mechanical age of materialism; but we find the Law still true in every detail. Its foundation is perfect logic. It still meets the needs of man. Man, however, is morally weakened by the influences of the age. He is less able to appreciate Truth, less inclined to follow an austere path. Therefore we see Buddhism, and other Religions, decay and decline. Religion throughout the world has ceased to reach the clouded intellect of man.

The Buddhist Law itself, as now presented, is a tangle of legend and formulæ with which priests, politicians, commentators and translators have obscured it for 2,000 years. The books would heap up into a considerable mountain; and of them all, the oft-despised *Light of Asia* is probably the most truly Buddhist in spirit. Anyone who wants a copy of *Buddhist Psychology* may have mine with pleasure. Buddhism was a serenely

simple philosophy as it left the lips of its founder in parables. Otherwise it could not have fired the imagination of the world. Something of its beauty, its logic, its tenderness is still visible through a fog of corruption.

In Burmese times the King, whatever his morals (and they were usually shocking), was Defender of the Faith. His Majesty's patronage and generosity gave Buddhism official support. The Vehicle of Religion was the *Sanga*, or Priestly Order, whose members were strictly supervised, and for whose discipline and correction a proper machinery existed. The *Phoongyis* were, as they still are sometimes, austere, good men, whose renunciation of the world was complete and real. We have now travelled far from those days. With the collapse of the Burmese Government, the *Sanga* was left without control. Its discipline and authority declined, and with it the Religion of which it is the organ.

Burma is now at one of those cross-roads whose divergent paths lead to widely different ends. The sign posts point to 'Buddhism' and 'Materialism.' It is important to take the high-way to happiness and success, and not the apparently more inviting one ending in rocks of disappointment and disillusionment. There are always selfish, unscrupulous people whose inexperience tempts them along the easy way: and because they are clamorous and insistent, as well as very foolish, their will is apt to prevail. Finally, they

have learned the strategic value of concealing purely political, selfish or vindictive aims under the cloak of religion. Nothing could be more damaging to the Law. It is time that true Buddhists resisted the prostitution of the *Dhamma* for personal, political, and utterly paltry ends, which are in themselves subversive to Buddhism. We will not go into the Shoe question, anti-drink, boycott, unity, and other religious disguises of purely political agitation. At the moment they are dull, futile and palpably insincere. Later they will be forgotten as if they had never been. They serve however as warnings of the unscrupulous use to which religion is put by essentially irreligious people.

Militant *Phoongyism* and Shoe Notices are birds of ill-omen which will return to roost. The Shoe question in particular has raised a host of enemies for Burma. It is a vindictive move to humiliate Europeans, or exclude them from pagodas. But most Europeans never visit Pagodas, and the few who do are Burma's true friends, whom it would surely have been wise to encourage. But Wisdom has flown away, and the Burmese moderates, though they strongly disapprove, have allowed themselves to be cowed into silence by threats of violence. In the meanwhile Europeans have boycotted the city pagodas. The Crown Prince of Siam, himself a Buddhist, refused to remove his shoes—and all the world laughed. The Shoe fanatics have covered themselves with ridicule. The tolerance,

of which they are so proud, is voted a fraud, and they have outraged a principle of Buddhism. A campaign so futile, so petty, is bound to fizzle out, unless, indeed, Buddhism REALLY abandons its traditional broad-mindedness.

Fanaticism has always mis-used religion. As Inquisitors applied the screw in the name of Christ, as Ghazis stab the first infidel to vindicate the faith, so Burman fanatics set up 'Shoe Notices' to prove their traditional sense, and the tolerance of Buddhism. "We are Buddhists," they say, "and therefore we *must* be tolerant whatever we do, and however bigotted, narrow and material our behaviour is." The pity is that such utterly paltry questions, which are mere passing froth, and petty post-war peevishness, should be allowed to prejudice for a moment the splendid nobility of Buddhism.

The present unbalanced character of the young generation arises from a neglect of their native literature, institutions and religion. The Burman-Buddhist is still a Burman, but no longer a Buddhist in anything but name. He is still proud of that tolerance, common-sense and broadmindedness which won him special respect and admiration in the past. But the Young Burman, who boast loudest of these qualities, does not in fact now possess them. These are the attributes of Buddhism, and it must not be imagined that the attributes of Buddha's Law can be inherited without following its precepts.

It must of course be remembered that public manifestations of madness are limited to a very small minority who to-morrow will turn with equal zeal to the *pwe* and the cinema. New Burma is not vastly different from the old. Still, the increase of crime generally should, in my humble opinion, be attributed directly to the decline of Buddhism. Many other reasons have been suggested. Opium, drink, egoism, environments, leisure, loss of land, and unsuitable legislation are all, no doubt, contributory. But the real cause at the root of all others is irreligiousness. The *Luzo* (or professional bad-character) now occurs everywhere: an audacious, cunning, unscrupulous person who lives by his wits. He is without shame, and without any standard of right or wrong. The criminal in Burma is often 'habitual'; but at the same time the majority of crime is 'unpremeditated.' The *Luzo* trades on his fellows, on his weaker brothers, on the simple minded. He lives openly in the lime-light, because there is not sufficient public disapproval to suppress him. He thrives on the limitations of the police, the timidity of witnesses, and the scrupulousness of the courts.

If tried and acquitted—*tant mieux*. If convicted—jail is after all not a bad place. Food and clothing are plentiful and free. He returns at intervals to prison (as to an hotel), and leaves it fitter, heavier and sleeker each time, without a shadow of disrepute amongst his friends—who indeed fête him on his release.

At fifty he puts on a white robe and a long face, assumes a pious deportment and a rosary, and prepares for *Neikban*, confident that the Law is as complacent on the other side of the grave as it is on this. This deplorable type is certainly a minority, but it is growing : and the only cure is a return to Buddhism. If the Burmese are to avoid moral and national ruin, they *must* resume conscientiously the faith of their fathers.

Religion has lost its grip in Europe because dogmas have ceased to meet our needs. In Burma religion has decayed only because it is no longer taught. The Burmese are in no way shaken in their conviction of the *Dhamma*, but for a long period of years they have neglected it. Now they know very little about it. Their Buddhism is an empty show—impregnating it is true their thoughts and speech from force of habit, but still meaningless ; an affair of showy charities and festivals which are partly formal, partly amusing, and partly ostentatious, but wholly devoid of deep feeling.

All can gabble the precepts, but they convey nothing, and in fact have lost their force by thoughtless and frequent repetitions. It is easy to quote, or misquote, a *Jataka* for political ends. But *Kalayana Meikta* the law of keeping good company : *Sanda-Gadi* desirelessness : *Baya-Gadi* fearlessness : *Dawtha-Gadi* passionlessness : and *Mawha-Gadi* lawfulness, are rarely put to practical application. They are not qualities to be acquired by parrot-like repetition. Let us recall Buddha's last speech to Ananda as he lay

dying :—‘ No one is my follower, or fulfills the Law by vain and outward homage. *Only they are my followers who truly observe the Law.*’

The average Burman, especially in Lower Burma, does not study the Law. As a child, he assumed the robe and entered the monastery not for some years as his fathers did, but just for a few days as a formality. He has consequently received no religious instruction in his life. His native literature is a closed book. He has therefore no moral stability, no real conviction, no depth of character. As a necessary result he is utterly material. The hot, sensitive man is flung into surroundings of special temptation, without a single principle to restrain his passion. It is sometimes the subject of jest that the highest record of crime in the Empire belongs to the Burman Buddhist. But this is by no means the case. The distinction belongs to that modern anomaly—*the Burman without Buddhism.*

To this moral lassitude may be attributed the significant change that has come over the national character. The people have become a ship without rudder. At one moment they are listless : at another rushing blindly before any gust of wind—volatile, unprincipled, easily lead astray. The thoughtful student can see these eccentricities at work in the political controversies of the day.

The inevitable result of the decline of Buddhism must be the decline and impoverishment of the *Phoon-yis* or Religious Order, since obviously the Order is

dependent on the Faith. The Order has already fallen so low as to deserve the contempt of many Buddhist. Now the Order or *Sanga*, is the greatest social institution in Burma. It is, or was from B.C. 500 to A.D. 1920, essentially non-political. It has, by this wise aloofness from worldly affairs, survived countless disturbances and revolutions. The deliberate encouragement of *Phoongyis* to mix in politics, in defiance of the *Thathanabaing's* orders, is deplorable, and might well result in a serious split in the Church. It is the most unwise step taken by a rash, irresponsible party, and one deeply resented by earnest Buddhist. The *Sanga* is the vehicle of learning, religion and literature, whose members are required first and foremost to irradicate all passion from their hearts. Now the *Sanga* is certainly in danger. The old checks and safeguards are gone. There is no discipline. Lazy persons, criminals and noisy politicians can enter it unquestioned—and do so. The Sacred Robe may screen Wolf Priests who carry daggers, attack people in Pagodas, promote riots, preach hatred and sedition, and in short outrage the essential laws of Buddhism. We have seen already how the licentious spirit of the Ari has persisted down the ages, ever ready to assert itself when opportunity offers.

It is absolutely necessary for the social welfare of Burma to restore the *Sanga* to that holiness, meekness and learning which has distinguished it for two thousand years. It is to objects such as these that Burmese should turn their attention. They have a thousand-

and-one vital things to put in order besides the constitution. And the paths to follow are right speech, right thought, right resolve, right living.

Fortunately, the character of nations is not changed in a day. The broad-mindedness and commonsense for which the Burmese have been distinguished cannot be subverted so easily. A good solid element of wisdom has carried Burma through the world's post-war crisis with considerable success, if we bear in mind all the surrounding circumstances. At all times there has been a majority of level-minded people who were at first amazed, and then cowed, by the excitement and heresy introduced from outside. But as the folly, selfishness and hypocrisy of those movements became evident, so public feeling set and congealed into disapproval. In time, when opinion consolidates, it will seek real and healthy reform, as opposed to frenzies which merely disintegrate character, law and religion. A people traditionally democratic will not patiently endure mob intimidation. There have been lamentable capitulations by public men to agitators, and even to cocky little school boys: but on the other hand there are those who made a brave stand, and passed unscathed through what is, after all, only hot air. The peril threatening Buddhism is clearly understood by hundreds of earnest and intellectual Burmans, who are even now striving to counteract the poisons at work.

Perhaps the new kind of Government will enable the Burmese themselves to effect a reform in these

delicate matters. The true solution lies in a return to the monastic system, coupled with a reform of the *Sanga*. It should not be difficult to convince the *Phoongyis* and the Laity that good *Phoongyis* have everything to gain, and nothing to fear, from discipline. Discipline will operate only on bad *Phoongyis* who at present bring discredit on good and bad alike. In Burmese times there was a registration of monks twice a year ; and it is not generally known that until 1891 the *Thathanabaing's* powers did in fact extend to Lower Burma.

There seems no reason why ordinary Government Schools should not return to the monasteries where in the class-rooms the Education Department would retain supreme control. Out of class the *Phoongyi* would rule in the capacity of House Master. There could be no room for friction. Government's grants would go to the preservation and improvement of beautiful monasteries, many of which are important monuments. The prestige of the *Phoongyis* would be restored, and lay supervision revived through local school boards. The *Kyaung* would become once more the seat of learning, and children would attend for a period of years as their fathers did. They would imbibe the religion and literature of their country in such surroundings almost unconsciously. At the same time education would assume a 'national' atmosphere, Science would be tempered by more human influences, and Government would still maintain its wise religious neutrality.



TAWADEINTHA.

CHAPTER XIX.

A DIVINE DESPOTISM.

A FEW miles north of Mandalay there is fascinating country round Taung-Byôn and Madaya¹. It requires, however, more than usual fortitude to face the railway journey, and therefore this quiet area, with its villages, pagodas and tamarind trees, is known only to the adventurous. The tiny train drawn up near the Zegyo Market, sets out on its reckless run of 16 miles in three hours, by wallowing along the smelliest drains of Mandalay, until, beyond Obo, it passes reluctantly into clean open country, and follows the bank of a small canal. Hundreds of people use this canal in August when they go by boat to the festival at Taung-Byôn, and cheer the train, and bet on their chances of beating it. It is a gay and pretty scene; and the narrow canal is shaded with *Htanaung Bin* trees, whose quaintly twisted limbs are so typical of Upper Burma. Early in the rains the white Pagodas stand amidst flaming Gold Mohur. Rice fields, and the floods of the Irrawaddy, stretch away into the distance.

The annual festival at Taung-Byôn is a great *Nat* celebration, which affords a welcome interlude of

¹ Map Square D. J.

Animism in the rigors of the Buddhist Lent. Vast crowds flock to it, bent on pleasure: and the *Nats* themselves suddenly wake to tremendous activity, especially the brothers *Shwe Byin Gyi* and *Shwe Byin Nge* in whose honour the festival is held. Their wives, who are Mediums or *Nat-Gadaws*, assemble from all parts of Burma.

There are in Burma thousands and thousands of *Nats*. Every locality has its own, but of these only thirty-seven have wide popularity. For instance the River *Nat* enshrined in the Bu Paya at Pāgan, to whom fisher-folk offer prayers, is unknown beyond the limits of his own area.

The legend of the brothers *Shwe Byin Gyi* and *Shwe Byin Nge* is long. The facts may, however, be briefly summarised as follows:—In the time of King Manuha (eleventh century) two Indian brothers Byat Wi and Byat Ta floated to Thaton on trays, and were adopted by a priest. Having killed and eaten a fabulous beast, they became endowed with supernatural powers. Byat Wi messed about with the intended bride of King Manuha, was killed, and became the guardian *Nat* of Thaton. But Byat Ta went to Anawratta, King of Pāgan, and by his magic enabled Anawratta to sack Thaton (in 1057 A.D.) and carry off the sacred Buddhist books. At Pāgan, Byat Ta was appointed to bring fresh flowers daily from Mt. Popa for the palace; and on these expeditions he met a *Belu-Ma*, now known as *Amé Gyi* (Great Mother), by whom he had two sons,

Shwe Byin Gyi and *Shwe Byin Nge*. These are the individuals with whom we are now concerned.

Their father Byat Ta being regarded with jealousy, was killed on the pretext that he was late with his flowers ; and no doubt he *was* late, since the maid of the mountain was fair. Fortunately, his two sons inherited his magic. Anawratta adopted them, and gave each a golden vase (*Byin*). Hence their names *Shwe Byin Gyi* and *Shwe Byin Nge*, *Big* and *Little Golden Vases*. They are now probably the most powerful *Nats* in Burma. Certainly their festival is the greatest, and their votaries the most numerous. In memory of their Indian origin they are still *salaamed*, and not *shikoed*.

Later on they became generals ; and when Anawratta invaded China they helped him (by their miraculous powers) to secure a sacred tooth of Buddha jealously guarded by the Chinese Emperor. Whatever elements of history there may be about these brothers, the successful invasion of China is certainly an invention. Kyanzittha, we know, sent a friendly Mission to the Emperor some years later. It has been suggested that the *Tayok*, or *Taruk-Taret*, of early history were really Shans, or Tai, who then occupied Tali Fu, and that the word *Tayok* was transferred to the Chinese later when they conquered Yünnan¹. Probably Anawratta's alleged expedition was against the Shans of Nan-chao (Tali Fu). Anyhow, that does not matter. *Nats* are not historians. We must permit them considerable

¹ *Upper Burma Gazetteer*, Part I. Vol., I. Pages 193 and 196.

license, and pass over wide discrepancies in chronology to enable them to associate themselves with the golden age of Anawratta.

The Buddha-tooth was taken to Pagan, and then placed on a mythical beast which halted with it at Taung-Byôn. So at this spot it was enshrined in the Su-daung-byi (*The Pagoda of the Wish-fulfilled*). Prince Kyanzittha, the future Hero King, was responsible for building the shrine, and ordered that every one should bring one brick. Shwe Byin Gyi and Shwe Byin Nge failed to contribute, but played at beans instead—which beans (three large slabs of stone) can still be seen; while to this day, there are two bricks missing from the interior of the Pagoda. King Anawratta when he came and saw the gap was annoyed, and ordered the execution of the brothers. The phases of their arrest, which at first they resisted, are immortalized in the names of several villages such as Lun Taung (*Ask for Rope*): Dok Yaik (*Hit Stick*): and Wayin Dok (*Bamboo Stick*).

Later they submitted and were killed in a savage manner. When Anawratta re-embarked for Pagan, his barge was prevented from moving. Seeking the reason, it was found that the spirits of the Brothers were holding it back. Being summoned, they told the King they had become *Nats*, and had nowhere to live. So he assigned a place for them near the Relic Pagoda where their 'Palace' was built, and still stands. They are always represented as two-seated figures with

'sloped' swords. The King further dedicated to their service the Princess obtained in his late Chinese expedition, whose descendants, it is claimed, still attend the shrine after eight centuries.

While all kinds of women, and a few men too, become mediums, the service of these *Nats* is mainly hereditary. The guardians of the shrine, the musicians, the bearers who carry the images and their paraphernalia at the festival, and the attendants who ride with them in their palanquin, are all hereditary officers whose right to perform these duties has descended in their families for hundreds of years. The *Nat-Gadaws* (mediums) are outside this hierarchy, and are simply women who feel inspired, and who devote themselves to one or other of the brothers, to whom they are formally married. The four Chief Queens, or *Mi-Bayas*, are ladies of great importance. The lesser wives are often mere witches. As already mentioned, these women attend the festival annually from all parts of Burma. On the first evening they report their arrival by dancing with swords and flowers before the images of their spiritual husbands. The scene is curious and lavish. The status of these women gives them considerable influence. Many are wealthy, and their fingers are covered with jewels, while on their heads are tied curious shimmering baskets of flowers. This ceremony is a sort of seance. The mediums are violently shaken and agitated, and often appear to swoon. Their trembling resembles that of *Mihtoïs* at Kachin *Nat*

Gālaws, though it is rather less convincing. We witness no doubt a survival of the Animism which preceded the introduction of Buddhism—and it is interesting to note the apparent unbroken descent from a remote age of the hierarchy which administers at the shrine of this ancient cult. Like Confucianism in China, Bön in Tibet, and Shinto in Japan, *Nat* worship in Burma has successfully survived centuries of contact with Buddhism. The two are cleverly harmonized to avoid rivalry. Thus we see these *Nats* associated with Burma's hero King, and actively engaged in securing Buddhist books and relics. Neither religion, however, is much influenced by the other; and each, though followed by the same people, is diametrically opposed in every essential detail. To those conversant with the spirit and policy of Buddhism, this state of affairs is not, however, very surprising. It is simply a case of live and let live, and a recognition of the fact that the lofty ethics and logic of Buddhism are really beyond the comprehension of the masses.

Later in the evening various *Nats* are represented by dances: which dances are slightly different for each. Each *Nat* has its own special music. Their character is, as far as possible, acted. The Pākan Min dance, for reasons to be explained later, is a Cock-like movement. The Child-*Nat*, Ma Nemi, is shown playing with toys and flowers, and holding the corner of her scarf shyly in her teeth. It somewhat shattered one of my favourite themes to see this part taken by an ex-butler who wore

a belt made of double rows of sovereigns. His late master would, I am sure, have been amazed at his butler's antics, and not a little shocked at the fabulous value of his belt.

Next morning, to the fearful agitation of the *Nat-Gādaws*, the images of the two brothers are removed to a distance of two miles, first in a palanquin, and then in boats, to a certain tree, where they are washed in the Irrawaddy, and brought back.

The greatest crowds gather at the conclusion of these preliminaries. There is a fair with restaurants, flower shops, silk shops, toy shops, and all manner of side-shows to charm money from the pocket. Night is devoted to the Circus and the *Pwe*. The gay, bright-coloured, kindly crowd is Burmese. Therefore it has four qualities—daintiness, cheeriness, quiet speech, and a capacity for sudden gust of passion. In short, it is essentially human. Its mood restores one's confidence after all this blather about politics. The Orator may hold the Burmese Stage a while with new Indian patter, but the *Minthami* will return to her own again.

In the centre of the fair, and round the *Nandaw* or Palace of Shwe Byin Gyi and Shwe Byin Nge, hundreds of sheds are put up to accommodate the *Nat Gādaws* (Mediums) and the collections of *Nat* figures which they bring together from all parts of Burma. In each shed is a row of *Nats*, lavishly attired in jewels, tinsel, scarves and silk turbans, according to their several traits. Some are splendidly new,

others antique; but all are spirited and very human. All *Nats* have lived, and all have died violently, and have reached the peculiar honour of God-hood by reason of their heroic or pathetic stories, and the tragic manner of their deaths. The figures here assembled give a good general idea of the *Nats* of Burma, their legends, and their several degrees of popularity. Little *Ma Nemi*, for instance, the Child-*Nat* who we met at Shwe-zet Daw, is one of the most popular on account of her pathetic history. This shy little maid is often shown with a finger held coyly in the corner of her mouth, and I doubt if there was ever a row of *Nats* in which she is not represented. *Myauk-pe Kădu Thekin-ma*, whose child lies in her lap playing with its toes, is another popular deity. Women approach her who want babies, and mothers consult her. She is generally concerned in keeping children happy, and may be regarded as their Patron Saint. Surely, she is successful with those who survive. No babies are so merry and fascinating as those of Burma. Alas! that forty per cent. die young. This *Nat*, as her name indicates, is a *Kădu Nat* from Chindwin. Her draperies are usually black: and so also are those of her neighbour *Amé Gyi Ye-Yin-Gădaw* who is much like in appearance, but often rides a tiger, and carries a sword instead of a baby. She is the mother of the *Nat-Brothers* whose festival we have come to celebrate.

No collection I have ever seen is complete with all the chief 37 *Nats*, but certain favourites are always

exhibited. There are, in the sheds of Taung-byôn, scores of Ma Nemis and Pâkan Mins, but only one figure of U Yin Gyi the famous *Nat* of Lower Burma whose festival is held at Ma-u-bin, and who was stolen away by Nymphs by reason of his exquisite playing. He always carries a harp, and is sometimes mounted on a crocodile. Then *Anawratta* and *Kyanzittha*, the two favourite Burmese Kings are deified, as also *Tabin Shwe Ti* the Talaing King, but their images are rarely seen. I have never yet found a figure of *Anawratta*, whose symbol is a polo-stick, though I once saw a picture of him in a Burmese book. Other important *Nats*, not often seen, but each popular in their own part of Burma, are *Ko-Myo-Yin* of Kyaukse ; *Ko-Po-Tu* (on a tiger) from the Shan country ; *Awa-Min-Gaung Gyi* (on an elephant) a deified Talaing soldier-King from Ava ; and *Ngwe-Daung-Thu* from the Yaw country.

It is worth being acquainted with a few of the favourite *Nats*, whose exploits have cast a net-work of romance over the country. They are autocrats, relentless and exacting ; but the people submit gladly to this divine despotism. These are benevolent Beings so long as you pay your dues, and are polite and respectful. It would be foolish to incur their wrath. As the superstitious old lady said, when she bowed to the Devil in Church :—" Politeness costs nothing, and besides you never know."

Another very popular *Nat* with whom we are already familiar is *Maung Tint De*, the blacksmith of

Tăgaung. He is also known as *Ain-dwin-Min-Ma-Găyi*. Associated with him is his wife *Shwe Nabé Thekin Ma*, whose 'Belu' origin is indicated by a dragon hat. Maung Tint De's eldest sister is the *Nat Shwe Mye-hna* (Golden Face). His youngest sister *Thon Ban Hla* (Three Kinds of Beauty), as already noted, is the mother of little Ma Nemi.

Hti-Byu-Saung is the Hermit Nat, recognized by his rosary, yellow robe, and priestly hat. He is said to have been the father of Anawratta, and to have been driven from his throne by the Kyi-Zo Sokadé Princes and made to live in a monastery as a Hermit.

In most *Nat-Shrines* there are two figures on horse-back. Of these, one with a Burmese helmet and a sword, is *Myin-Byu Shin* the Dry Zone Nat, whose story I have already related on page 219 of '*A Burmese Enchantment*.' The other is *Păkan Min*, also known as *U Min Kyaw*, whose damning emblems are fighting-cocks and two bottles of wine slung to his saddle. The *Māha Gita* informs us that Păkan Min was a son of Thein Kwin, King of Păkan, that he was exiled and built Păkan, then called Kookhan, and that he made a canal. In proof thereof, there still exists a village called Myaung Tu Ywa (*Canal Dig Village*). This is all very edifying; but

On the tomb-stone will be seen,
Not what he was :
But what he should have been.

There is quite another version of Păkan Min's career, with a heap of evidence to support it. It is to be feared that he is our Burmese Bacchus, that he married a bar-maid Ma Bo Me, and acquired a taste for drink and gaming. Hence the symbolic bottles and cocks. These disreputable details were unearthed for me by Maung Ba Win, Assistant Superintendent of Excise, who (as an Excise Officer) had evidently been on Păkan Min's tracks to some purpose. It is further laid down for the guidance of *Nat Gădaws* that when dancing in honour of this *Nat* they should wear pink *putsos* and *gaung-baungs*,¹ clap their arms, and move like fighting-cocks. Fame has evidently chosen to immortalize in Păkan Min a sportsman, and a *Bon-Viveur*.

¹ Skirts and fillets.

CHAPTER XX.

BEYOND MANDALAY.

(*Map Square D.J.*)

MADAYA, the terminus of the toy railway, is a wonderful garden of betel and cocoanut palms. The country is fertile and irrigated, but unhealthy. Canals flow in all directions through palm groves, where flash the jewelled wings of king-fishers. Beyond the dense plantations there is open jungle, where white-necked storks build on the tree-tops in March. In June, weaver-birds, their heads now crowned with gold, hurry to and fro building their amazing nests.

During my visit a certain yellow bird called Maung Yin Wa Hgnet, or *Yellow Novice*, caused a sensation in one of the villages by suddenly assuming a new song. The Burmese are quick enough to note any such phenomena, which appeals strongly to their imagination. A thrill of this sort is always agitating the mystery-loving Burmese. A few weeks before, a golden image had made its appearance in another village, where it was visible to some people but not to others. Such manifestations, and the appearance of fire-balls and so on about a pagoda, are due to the power of relics, but are not considered fortunate signs.

Elsewhere, a man dug up treasure which he remembered having buried in a previous life. These interesting events are, of course, topics of delightful speculation. I cannot identify the *Yellow Novice* of the present occasion, but its unseemly conduct may perhaps be ascribed to the power of mimicry which some birds possess. For a short period this otherwise sober little bird suddenly broke out with a whistle which sounded distinctly like :—

Ta-se pe me. Yu-ma-la ?

Ta-se pe me-byo.

Kyok-po ta-se.

which means—*I will give you ten. Will you take it ? I will give you ten. Ten to me too.* I can only suggest that this depraved *Yellow Novice* was the reincarnation of a Bookie, or perhaps of an Ari monk.

Thirty-three miles of bad road connect Madaya with Singu on the Irrawaddy.¹ The journey is an easy one of 3 marches, through pretty country where forest alternates pleasantly with pasture. The Francolin calls cheerfully from the thicket, and barking-deer are frequently seen and heard. In June the first rain-storms have washed the distant hills with blue. The foliage is fresh, and the ground covered as by magic with a carpet of turf. Each village is buried in

¹ This was formerly one of the recognized routes between Amara-pura and Shwebo. Mindon Min used it on his flight to raise his successful rebellion in 1852. A most delightful and entertaining account of that incident, and of the subsequent story of Mandalay, is given in the *Upper Burma Gazetteer*, Part I, Vol. I, Chapter II.

tamarinds whose tender greenery casts pools of shade over the country, where the people live their quiet lives in cool shadows. Pagodas and lions stand here and there—some new, some old, and some engaged in their death-struggle with the destroying *peepul*. A solitary marble hill called Sagyin Taung rises in the west, whence come the marble Buddhas of Burma. We passed several blocks of stone being carried into Mandalay, where they are finished off in the neighbourhood of the Arakan Pagoda. The quarries are the monopoly of a few hereditary workers.

The country through which we are passing has a military tradition, though that tradition is now nearly forgotten. In these happier days, when the Burmese have once more found their feet as soldiers, it is to be hoped the old spirit will revive. Madaya, Yenatha and Singu were all military posts whose fortifications, though now overgrown by jungle, can still be traced. The name Madaya is derived from *Mat-taya*, meaning *a hundred Chiefs*. Outside Yenatha is an out-post called Kin Ywa, or *Sentry Village*. These forgotten posts no doubt influenced profoundly the lives of the ancestors of the present generation. Half way between Yenatha and Shwepyi is a marble slab lying in a *zāyat*, or shed, which records that the shed and adjacent tank were repaired 24 years ago, and that, according to legend, a grandson of Kyanzittha came here with an army and a thousand officers.

This tour, like so many others, was directed at spreading Burmese recruiting into rural districts with a view to securing country-folk instead of town-bred lads. Mandalay itself was entirely ignored. Under the tamarind and peepul trees we held meetings to which people came from all the surrounding villages. The elders, upon whose attitude so much depends, seemed impressed. We got nearly one hundred recruits in a fortnight, an achievement which, in an area hitherto unexploited, argues well for the future.

The country round Shwepyi is intimately associated with the unsavoury tragedy of Htilat. The incident has lent names to a dozen villages and streams. Htilat lived at Nyaungwun, and earned celebrity by disemboweling his wife Ma Po U, a native of Shwe Kon Taing, in order to procure her son as a charm for invisibility. Some say the Htilat pagoda in this neighbourhood was built by Htilat himself. Others say it was built by his father, who, however, left the shrine without a crown until his son's time. Hence the name Htilat Paya—*Pagoda without Umbrella*. Htilat received his dreadful idea from a *Nat* whose memory is preserved in the names of two streams, U Min Chaung (*Stream of Prince U*), and Nat Min Chaung (*Stream of the Nat Prince*). The instructions of the *Nat* were written on a *parabaik*, or folding book, which Htilat found in the mouth of a crocodile at Chaung Thon Gwa (*Three Rivers*): and he thought the whole matter over at Chyin Hnaing Chaung (*Thinking over Stream*). The deed was

committed at The Hpauk Gon (*Son Stab Hill*): and the pitiful charm was laid out on the ground at Pek Kin Chaung (*Leaves spread Nook*).

So much for the deed. The strange part is that it does not appear in the least revolting to the Burmese. Htilat lived for a time by robbery, and according to one account built the pagoda out of the proceeds. Eventually he was arrested and brought before the King of Ava who was so charmed with his delightful manners, that he appointed Htilat Minister of the Treasury !! The legend records that Htilat died full of honour, and apparently no moral lesson is intended. Unable to appreciate the indigenous belief in charms and omens, the European mind is entirely incapable of following the train of Burmese thought into such situations. This is a subject however to which I shall revert in a later chapter. It is quite certain that Burmese Kings buried people alive under the foundations of pagodas, palaces and embankments, selecting victims with fortunate names like *Aung*, *Pyu* and *E* (Victorious, White and Cool). And this in a Buddhist country ! The persistence of *Nat* worship must not, however, be overlooked. Again, the behaviour of Wethandaya in giving away his wife and children appears to us monstrous, whereas the Burmese regard it as the highest expression of charity and unselfishness. The story of Htilat, beside giving names to a number of rivers and villages, is often represented in wood-carvings, and is the subject of plays. A dozen years ago the hideous

deed was repeated by a man in Lower Burma, who had seen the play acted. But instead of being promoted to a Treasury, he was hanged.

A shallow lake near Shwepyi affords good duck and snipe shooting in winter. By June the duck are gone, but great crowds of large water-birds remain. I have seldom seen such quantities of plover, cormorants, heron and storks together. Enormous adjutants assemble in scores, and jabiru, or black-necked storks, also resort here. It is quite fascinating to watch the antics of these large birds. They take little notice of the villagers who drag the shallows with nets. Painted storks march across the lake methodically in quick step, like a regiment in close order. It is wonderful that any fish at all survive the activities of so many expert fishermen.

Singu, with its white pagodas by the Irrawaddy is, of course, known by sight to river travellers. But mail steamers sweep contemptuously by without touching. It is an old little place, full of ruined shrines and lions and big trees, and is said to have been founded in the 6th century B.E. Singu derives its name from the outlaw Nga Sin who, as the word "*ku*" denotes, swam the Irrawaddy at this point. In fact he swam it twice, the feat being commemorated by the villages of Ma-hkauk and Ma-la on the opposite bank. These names are corruptions of *Hnit-hkauk* and *Hnit-la* which mean respectively *twice going* and *twice coming*. Wild characters like Nga Sin are affectionately remembered in

Burma, and their memory cherished much as that of Robin Hood. Many were outlaws only temporarily. Probably they were really political leaders who had the people's sympathy, and sometimes, as in this case, they came into favour later on with Kings who had formerly hunted them. Several river-side villages in this section of the Irrawaddy record the pursuit of Nga Sin by King Kyanzittha in the 11th century. At a village, now called Shagwe, Nga Sin took refuge in a hollow cutch tree (*Sha Bin*) which Kyanzittha cleft with his spear. Hence the name Shagwe—*Cutch-tree Cleft*. The place where Nga Sin turned and laughed at his pursuer is called Nga Ye: and where the king got a clear view of the fugitive is called Tat Ywa—*Sight Village*. At last Kyanzittha thought he had got Nga Sin, and that place is now called Sheinmāga—a corruption of *Shi Mu ga*—*Will he be there?* Finally Nga Sin was captured at Singaing—*Sin Caught*. Then followed reconciliation, and Nga Sin helped Kyanzittha in his wars. I am indebted to U Shein, Township Officer of Singu, and to Maung We Le, Circle Police Inspector, for many of these stories. Legend has obscured incidents and names. The names themselves are corrupt—sometimes beyond recognition. Yet they contain the germ of history, and preserve brave deeds and brave men from oblivion. They hand down living personalities through the centuries. Legend chooses with whimsical disregard of merit its heroes for remembrance, without much discrimination of motives and



PAGODA LIONS.



morals. Some are worthy, some are not—but fearless men of every age have claimed the sympathy of their fellows and the affection of posterity, and to such is given immortality in the speech of the people.

On the lower slopes of the hills, seven miles east of Singu, lies an old pagoda called Mālé Păya—obscure and remote, but endowed locally with great sanctity. From the quiet, shaded village of Mālé, a handsome causeway, massive and simple in design, ascends the hill to the shrine. The bell-shaped pagoda and its fine *tāzaung*, or pavilion, stand in a wide court as yet unspoiled by modern frightfulness. It breathes the atmosphere of old Burma; and from the paved court-yard a splendid view is obtained of the wooded country across which lies the road from Singu. According to the legend—and it is all set forth at length on an inscribed stone—the Saint, or *Arahan*, Shin Mālé obtained relics from the Thagya Min¹ twenty-nine years after the death of Buddha, and enshrined them here. Coming to something more authentic, it is recorded that Alaung-Sithu, fifth King of the Păgan dynasty, (A.D. 1112 to 1187)² visited the pagoda, repaired it, and dedicated land for its maintenance. The modern village of Kyauk Taing (*Stone Pillar*) was one of the boundaries of the consecrated area. The pagoda still enjoys this revenue which amounts to 2000 baskets of paddy a year, worth about

¹ The Thagya Min is the greatest of all the *Nats*.

² See my *Păgan*, pages 8 and 14.

Rs. 2,000. The fund is administered by the Headman of Nat-taung village. The descendants of slaves dedicated to the Mālé Pagoda by King Alaung-Sithu still (after 700 years) occupy the surrounding villages. Alaung-Sithu's prayer is preserved to this day. "May Kings and Governments who in future days repair this shrine, share my *kutho*,"¹ he said, "and may those who destroy my work of merit suffer hell, and never see the future Buddha."

The dedication of land for the up-keep of the Mālé Pagoda has been confirmed twice since Alaung-Sithu's day—first in 918 B.E. by Hsin Byu Shin (not the Hsin Byu Shin of the Alaungpra dynasty), and again in 955 B.E. by Maha Dhamma Yaza, King of Hanthawaddy. Alaung-Sithu's elephant plays an important part in the legend, and indeed confuses the issue by his waywardness. When aware of the sacredness of the site he fainted with surprise, but eventually recovered, bolted, returned, and died, leaving a track of names in his wake such as Hsin-pyu-ya-le (*White Elephant got back*), and Hsin-the-Chaung (*Elephant died Stream*).

Wuttagan, or dedicated land, is now comparatively rare. After annexation, Government was obliged to restrict the alienation of property, and to prohibit it altogether for private individuals. Only dedications made by Burmese Kings are recognized, but apparently they had made none for the last three or four centuries.

¹ Merit.

Indeed Bodaw Paya, seeking to restore his revenue, withdrew many dedication stones. The collection at Amarapura owes its existence to this fact, and not, as some have charitably supposed, to Bodaw Paya's interest in epigraphy.¹ It is a pity, however, that lands are not now dedicated afresh for the maintenance of some of the more important monuments of Burma, especially pagodas of historic or archæological value which have no festivals or other means of revenue. For instance, magnificent old monuments like the Tilo-minlo and Dhamma-yan Gyi Pagodas at Pāgan, now falling to pieces with neglect, might be preserved indefinitely by a grant of *Wuttagan* land. Experience shows that such dedications are highly popular. There are known cases of misuse, or appropriation of funds in times of financial stress, as when Bodaw Paya cancelled many grants. Dedications do not however usually lapse. Rather they tend to survive the vicissitudes of Governments, and provide a means of maintenance for all time. Regular repairs are possible when a building has a small income of its own, and such provision is more effective than niggardly grants from the Archæological Department when decay is already far advanced. In the case of Pāgan it appears that dedications of land mentioned in the inscriptions *have* lapsed, except in the case of the Ananda and Shwezigon Pagodas. These have assigned to them respectively 75 acres and 461 acres, but since they are in daily use, they are

¹ Report, Archæological Survey, 1921. Page 25.

less in need of endowments than any of the other monuments. The estimated cost of conserving the Tilo-minlo and Dhamma-yan Gyi Pagodas is Rs. 27,000, but even that sum only covers the most urgent repairs. The permanent preservation of these unique and splendid monuments can only be ensured by providing them with small, but steady, incomes.

Riverine villages in the Mandalay district are comparatively poor. This tour, in June 1920, was the first effort to recruit in such areas, and on the whole the result was promising. Most of the crops depend for success upon rain alone. Others rely on flooding, which may easily be too much or too little. Island property is constantly disappearing in one place and building up in another, but fresh silt is often covered with sand for the first few years. Nevertheless, efforts are being made to encourage island cultivation. It is at any rate less precarious for the pioneer than the opening up of virgin jungle, where he usually succumbs physically or financially to fever, failure or tree-stumps, leaving those who succeed him to benefit by his labours. Jungle clearing has been up-hill work in Katha and Mogaung. In Pegu it was found that no single pioneer who had cleared jungle in 1902 was in possession of the paddy land that was bearing valuable crops in 1912. Even their successors had failed, and it was the third generation that reaped the harvest.

At Singu I was met by Mr. C. F. Grant, I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner of Mandalay, who had served

with me in the 85th Burma Rifles during the war. His energy and sympathetic interest in Burmese recruiting has done much to encourage the right spirit in this area. Returning to Mandalay in his launch we were able to hold meetings at several small riverine villages. One of these was Katthin, where the Buddha was born in his buffalo incarnation. According to the legend, he fought a great battle with his father, and the words *Hkat-thin*, from which the village derives its name, means *Buffalo learning to fight*. Another village visited was Nandaw Gyun—*Royal Palace Island*—where King Bodaw Paya established a temporary residence while erecting his Mingun Pagoda. The vast wreck of that unfinished and ill-fated monument, still the largest masonry building in the world, now rent by earthquakes, lies on the opposite bank of the Irrawaddy, rising above the tree-tops like a mountain of brick.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN EASTERN VIEW.

THE curious legend of Htilat has been told in the last chapter. Its interest lies chiefly in the light thrown upon the Burmese attitude towards crime. Htilat was a robber who murdered his wife in order to obtain her unborn child as a charm. He was subsequently promoted to the charge of the King's Treasury, and became, locally at any rate, a heroic figure. To us his crimes appear horrible, and his promotion to place and favour inexplicable.

The Oriental attitude towards this and similar crimes was explained to me as follows by Taw Sein Ko, the well-known Chinese philosopher, to whom I submitted the legend for analysis. Physical phenomena, he said, are overwhelming and terrible in the East. Rivers and mountains are large and sinister, and storms violent and devastating. In the face of these threatening aspects of nature, the Oriental turns instinctively from the study of natural phenomena, which he regards as beyond the pale of human comprehension, and concentrates instead upon mental phenomena. Consequently, the marvellous and the supernatural receive his special attention, while to the ignorant, charms and omens assume an overwhelming

importance. The East has produced the philosophies and religions of the world. The West, not confronted with the sterner aspects of Nature, has inclined to the study of natural phenomena, which tends to develop materialism, especially in cold climates where there is keen struggle for existence. The attitude towards life, of East and West, is consequently essentially different. One wonders if those who gaily force European civilization upon Orientals really appreciate the supreme stupidity of their work. The European has become a cold, calculating scientist: the Oriental a dreamer, a philosopher, a student of the marvellous and supernatural. The East has evolved its own civilization—more democratic, more humane than we suspect—in which the people live at least more happily than we do ourselves.

The superstitious motive actuating Htilat's crime is therefore comprehensible to the Burman. With its morality he is not concerned, and here enters a religious issue. Htilat by his murder and robbery becomes automatically involved in the Buddhist Law of *Karma*—the Law of Cause and Effect—the Law of Moral Retribution, just and sure, not swerving a hair's breadth, and absolutely inexorable. Htilat's punishment—admittedly he deserves punishment—is assured in this life or another, and neither king nor people are called upon to hasten it. And to-day we are faced with the same attitude. The deserter is pitied for his misfortune. The murderer is admired for his pluck. The criminal is not exposed.

Witnesses hold aloof. A just retribution will overtake sin without human aid, and it is no one's business to interfere. It is impossible for us to follow these subtle arguments without a close insight into Buddhism, which is a pure, magnificent truth, yet too lofty perhaps for practical application by the descendants of apes, whose beasthood is after all hardly veiled, even in the best of us, by a thin screen of law, fear and convention.

Social laws in Buddhist countries do not attempt to supplement *Karma*. The earliest law-book known in Burma is the *Wagaru Dhammathat*, ascribed to Wagaru who, as we have seen, founded a Talaing kingdom at Martaban in the 13th century. Forchhammer describes it as 'a civil code.'¹ It appears to be the first attempt to separate religion from Hindu Law. Later on, of course, the Law became a vehicle of Buddhist principles, and of these *Karma*, the inexorable rule of 'Cause and Effect,' is an important principle whereby punishment comes automatically. Under Burmese regime, crime was considered only in its aspect as a civil wrong, for which the injured party must be compensated. This at least was the theory. Murder was punished by a fine of Rs. 300, to be paid to relatives of the deceased. It was the price of blood, and the same price, as we have seen, was paid during the late war for recruits, who, by enlisting, were of course going straight to glorious death, though it was usually permissible for

the martyr to sell himself again two or three times *en route*. The idea of compensation pervades simple codes like the present Kachin Hills Regulations, which are merely an embodiment of tribal fines and values.

Burmese Kings had few soldiers and police to support their authority. Poor fellows, they had no Legislative Councils : and the Y. M. B. A. did not then venture its valuable opinions. The Autocrat ruled (theoretically) by *Myitta* or love, by persuasion—in fact by expediency. In other words, he did what he damned well liked. An experienced collector of wealth like the robber Htilat was obviously the right person to appoint as guardian of the King's treasury. Hence his appointment.

However we may regard these views, they must be accepted as the basis of Oriental reasoning. One more illustration will suffice. In 1886, shortly after the British annexation, the dacoit Bo Swe was supreme in Minbu, where he had a large following. He tendered his surrender to Sir Charles Bernard on condition of appointment (without exam) to the post of Extra Assistant Commissioner. Sir Charles was astonished at what he considered the man's effrontery. But a Burmese King would certainly have accepted the offer in order to enlist Bo Swe's genius on the right side. Instead of conducting a further bloody campaign in Minbu, Bo Swe, with his personal experience of crime, would, no doubt, have made a model officer. Openly taking

bribes from both parties with charming impartiality, he would have returned that of the unsuccessful litigant. He would have administered cheap, intelligent justice : and the people individually, by avoiding him on all possible occasions, would have been as ' free ' as they ever will be with Home Rule.



BY LOVE INSPIRED.

CHAPTER XXII.

MANY INVENTIONS.

THE names of places in Burma are inexhaustable material for speculation. Their often charming significance, whether obvious or delightfully mysterious, casts a spell upon the land. These names are store houses of history and legend, where fancy is given rein, and wherein survive the ghosts of heroes, and dim memories of half forgotten incidents. So you get a whole series of village names in one area derived from the exploits of kings, soldiers and hunters. We have already had several examples. Thus live the deeds of Nga Sin, Htilat, Tint De, Anawratta, Kyanzittha and U Yin Gyi.

U Yin Gyi strayed, and on his violin
Charmed Goddesses who fell in love with him.
While vainly sought for him and wept alone,
His mother, in the *Rice Shop* of Pyapon.¹

Now centuries have passed. A *Nat* is he
To whom the Delta people bow the knee.
Rice, without meat, on trays, is offered him
On Lent-end festivals at Maubin.

Another class of names is poetical, like *Hnget Taik* (Bird's Nest): *Neikban* (Paradise): and *Hanthawaddy*

¹ Pyapon is a Talaing word, meaning *Rice Shop*, and is named in memory of U Yin Gyi's mother.

(Country of the Duck). *Tharrawaddy* is possibly derived from the Sanskrit *Cravasti*.

Others again are commemorative like *Myo Haung* (Old City): and *Ywa Thit* (New Village). Another whole series is derived from the names of trees like *Shwe-Nyaung-bin* (Golden Peepul Tree): *Apin-knitse* (Twenty Trees): or *Wa-sein-Taung* (Hill of the Green Bamboo). It is a subject of infinite charm and variety.

Names are sometimes so corrupt that one has to search closely for a derivation. For instance *Yamethin* is a corruption of *Nwa me ta-thin* (A herd of black cattle). *Pyawbwe* means 'Pleasant Picnic': and *Meiktila*, is named after the Indian city of Mithila.

There can be little doubt but that history and geography have been transported wholesale from India to Burma in the feverish attempt to link this country with classic and scriptural incidents. The word *Irrawaddy* is simply *Eya-Vati*. The classic name of the *Myitnge River* is *Duttha*. The derivation of the word *Salween* is more difficult. In Burmese, where double 'L' occurs in the middle of a word, the second 'L' is apt to become nasal. A final 'L' has the same nasal tendency. Thus the Burmese pronounce the English word *style* as *sa-tine*. So the Indian River *Sallavati* has probably been transferred to Burma, shortened, and changed to *Than-lwin*, or *Sa-la-vin*.

Tharekitaya (Old Prome) means field of gold. Many ancient legends cling to the Hill of Mandalay. The word *Mandalay* is probably derived from *Mandara*

the mountain of Hindu cosmology, with which the primeval seas were churned.

In Lower Burma quite another difficulty arises. There, the names were originally Talaing, Karen or Taungthu. Their old significance is lost, and not only has their sound been Burmanised, but the new Burman names have been so twisted as to give them an entirely new meaning. For instance the old Talaing village of Dagon when captured in 1755 A. D. by the Burmese under Alaungpra was called by them *Yan-gon*, which sounds something like the original, but has a quite new meaning—*i.e.*, *Where the War Ended*. This word was further corrupted when the British employed Arakanese interpreters who always use *ra* for *ya*, and made *Yan-gon*, *Rangoon*. The original Talaing name survives in the title of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda. A still better illustration of this transformation of names occurs in the case of the present Burmese village of Kyet-hpa Mwe-zaung (*Cock's Ruffle*) which was originally a Talaing Village called Kyaik-pa Mwe-zon (*Pagoda with two terraces*).

The English names of places in Lower Burma often differ widely from the Burmese names, as in the case of *Moulmein*, *Bassein* and *Prome* which the Burmese call *Maula-myaing*, *Pathein* and *Pye*. But there is no doubt but that (thanks to the Talaing interpreters used at occupation after the Second Burmese War) the present English names are more correct than the Burmese ones. For instance *Prome* (in Burmese *Pye*)

was, in its original Talaing form, called Toom Proom (City of Proom). Taw Sein Ko spells it *Brohm*, and suggests that the word means 'Brahm' or 'Brahma,' since in Pali, Burma was spoken of as *Brahma-desa*. A much more probable derivation is from *Pyon*, the name of a Pyu clan. The Burmese form 'Pye' may come from 'Pyi,' country. *Bassein* (Burmese *Pathein*) is, according to Fytche, *Kaw-smín* in Talaing, meaning 'Royal Mound.'

The word *Moulmein* affords a perfect example of the Burmese' shameless habit of transforming words. It is often spelt *Maulmein* and has been assigned a comforting Pali origin from *Mora* a peacock, and *Myaing* a forest—i.e., Peacock Forest. As a matter of fact, the word, so Duroiselle tells me, is pure Talaing, *Mot-la-myom*, meaning 'one eye destroyed.'

Martaban is possibly a Portuguese corruption, or a Burmese corruption (with indecent legend), of the Talaing. Its derivation is from the Talaing *Muh-ta-mawh*, meaning Rocky Point.

The same process has occurred in many Burmese words. *Mi-chit* is obviously derived from *matches*, but it has now a distinct Burmese meaning, namely, *Fire-strike*. Similarly they borrowed the word *Cholera* turning it into *Kala-na* with the new meaning *Foreigner's Sickness*. Plague has become *Paleik* in Burmese meaning *sickness which brings trouble with the Police*. We ourselves have treated the name for *Gold Mohur Tree* in just the same way, completely altering the

original Indian meaning of *Rose-Peacock Tree* (*Gul Mor*).

The Burmese language is often absurdly acquisitive. The term *one-sa-mor*, to clap or applaud, is from the English 'once more.' The word *Kur-tis*, often used for a pestle and mortar, is a graceful acknowledgment to Curtis, our provincial chemist.

Most of the Burmese capitals had classic Pali names ending with *pur* or *pura*, besides popular Burmese names. Thus *Ava*, or *In-wa*, was called officially *Rattanapura* (Jewel City). The classic name for *Sagaing* was *Jaya-pura* (Victorious City): *Amarapura* means Indestructible City. Proud hope! Now *Amarapura* is a ruin where in winter I go for picnics under the tamarind trees. Dead centuries sleep amongst the wreck of *Amarapura*. The ruins have absorbed an atmosphere of repose from the passage of time. The old lions, the crumbling pagodas, the decayed monasteries, have gathered mature stateliness from the passing years. The *Blue Rock-Thrush* haunts the old brickwork, and *Verditer Fly-catchers* hunt for insects in the palace of the King.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MERIT AND MORTAR.

"It was built," said he, "by U Po Kin."

I looked up at a dreadful brick-building painted green and yellow. The windows were closely barred with iron rods, and the culprit's name, with the date 1921, was written across the structure in English characters. This vulgar *zāyat*, or rest house, occupied an ostentatious site above the river, and with others of its kind encumbered what was once the wide court of a beautiful pagoda. The inhabitants, no doubt, cried *Thadu! Thadu!* at its dedication.

"It was built by U Po Kin."

"And was he sent to jail?" I enquired.

"To Jail! No, why?"

"For building that vulgarity. Don't you think it vulgar?"

My Burmese companion eyed the *zāyat* doubtfully. I fear he contemplates a like atrocity himself, and that in his heart he admires it.

The crude influence of this new fashion in brick is evident also in monasteries and private houses. It is considered original, whereas in fact it is nothing but a pitiful travesty of a Parsee's shop. Take Dadhibhoy's store, splash it with excruciating colours, stick a clock



THE WAY OF NEIKBAN.

in its face, and bar its windows like a jail. Paint the mortar with imitation bricks, call it "Golden Treasure of the Law," put up a notice "Remove your boots, signed Deputy Commissioner"—and there you have a modern Burmese Pagoda: a slap-dash, jerry-built horror, shockingly *nouveau riche*, and completely lacking inspiration. The P. W. D. could have done it better.

All nations experience periods of decadence in art. The Victoria Clock Tower in Mandalay marks the lowest depth of our own. In Burma the high-water mark was reached in the 11th and 12th centuries, in the splendid days of Pāgan. Those monuments will ever command admiration. The decline followed as a natural consequence of the fall of Pāgan (1286 A. D.). There were revivals, but the first high level was never reached again. Nor is it possible that the Burmese themselves could have built such superb edifices without the help of Indians and Talaings. When the Government fell after the Tartar invasion, at once, within 13 years, the Burmese were unable to build monuments of the Orissan type. They still excel in wooden buildings, and in brick buildings like the Ok Kyaung which are copies of timber work; but the pointed arch, so typical of Pāgan, was lost for ever.

Nothing administers a greater shock to national vitality than conquest, and in Burma there have been many conquests. In the days of Kyanzittha, architecture rose to inspired heights, expressing in every line the ideals of Buddhism. The present phase of decay

dates from the period of Pāgan Min (1846-53) in whose reign Pegu was finally lost. The country was impoverished : literature, religion and art languished : a new materialism undermined the æsthetic sense of the people, while foreign occupation wounded them in their pride. But it took more even than all that to achieve U Po Kin's *zāyat*.

The cause of the degradation is simply this. The Burmese have not been true to their own tradition. They have not developed their own inherited inclinations. They have copied from foreigners. *Their building to-day is not inspired because it is not Burmese.*

Indian models are as unsuitable to Mongolian Burmese as frock-coats to Japanese, or English idioms to Bengalis. Mimicry is never dignified.

The disastrous results of copying are plainly visible in the monuments of Amarapura. Round French windows, ghastly draped urns from English cemeteries, Italian angels, heraldic symbols, are there thrust upon Burmese architecture as a cadis-worm adds refuse to her house. Decoration lost all structural meaning. It was just stuck on for effect. Pillars and arches fulfilled no purpose. Masses of brick-work were piled on wooden supports. Their structural stupidity has brought these buildings to early ruin. An architecture so depraved has since seized upon corrugated iron as a God-send. It could not resist it. So the pitiful fall was complete—a fall from the Ananda, the Gawdaw-Palin, to U Po Kin's dreadful *zāyat*.

The strange thing is that even educated Burmans to-day do not realize the harm that is being done: otherwise they could not permit the desecration of pagoda courts by a crowd of utterly superfluous buildings. Criticism perhaps is cruel—but a critic may still be one who cares. As for myself it grieves me deeply to see Burma's beautiful old monuments crowded round and spoiled.

Were the Burmese to revert, even now, to purely indigenous models, I believe they could without difficulty recover their lost skill. But direction must come from within. The inspiration must in fact be Burmese. On indigenous lines they might yet evolve a beautiful and dignified style of architecture suitable to modern requirements.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHERE MOON AND STARS MEET IN THE MILKY WAY.

REAL poetry is the expression of sentiment. No mere creation of rhyme is poetical unless it conveys a suggestion. The examples of Burmese poetry given here, though still popular, are of considerable antiquity. According to Forchhammer (*Jardine Essay* : Page 66) the first poetry in the Burmese idiom was written by Thera Silavamsa (Maung Nyo) in the year 1453 A. D. Modern productions are decadent, not to say vulgar. Poetry necessarily belongs to a simple, undeveloped age when men, not yet too practical and calculating, are still imaginative, and abandon themselves readily to the charm of the unreal. Nations, like individuals, in their infancy are fanciful. Hence the quaint superstitions and fables met with on all sides in this country, whose people are still romantic. If they do not believe, at least they have not yet argued themselves into positive disbelief. Burma is still content to accept without question the supremacy of heroes and *Nats* like Tint De, Ma Nemi, Nga Sin, Sitnam, Min Byu Shin, and U Yin Gyi, who have established a dominion, half pleasing, half dreadful, over hill and vale. Their strange stories are told to-day with a simplicity that we should be the last to disturb. Disillusionment comes soon enough,

and then we look back regretfully to the harmless creations of childhood. Happy are they who remain through life steadfast in their faith in Peter Pan and Ma Nemi.

Burmese poetry during the last dynasty was still of a high order. Its peculiar charm (found also in Japanese verse) lies in its method of stimulating the imagination by ideas rather than by words. It is even more direct than much of the prose, where often every detail is minutely described. The *Wethandaya*, for instance, is extremely laboured and tiresome. Every flower and tree is separately mentioned, and the characters are all overdrawn. Nothing is left to the imagination. Burmese poetry, on the other hand, suggests far more than it depicts. It sketches a mere outline which the mind readily fills in for itself. Thus :—

I hear the clamorous return
Of Wild-duck and of Silver Tern.

To this uncurbed fancy, Burma owes all its charm. Its poetry, prose and legend are imaginative. Something romantic is told of every bird. Every mountain, cave and river has its fable, every shrine and village its poetic association. This enchantment, hidden from some, is capable of infinite development by all who surrender themselves to it, who accept it with simple faith.

Burmese poetry appears to devote itself largely to Nature, to the stars, to a few favourite characters, and to themes of love. Of the Nature poems the best known is an Ode to the Seasons (*Ya Thi Bwe*) written

long ago by U Min, a Court poet. In twelve verses he describes the seasons with considerable charm. The following examples refer to the months of *Tābodwe*, *Tābaung* and *Tāgoo*.

TĀBODWE.

Now stars and moon on *Yugan* shed their light.
 Now daily thrice the dew-drops glitter bright.
 And people in the shrines on the bended knee
 Hold in their hands the golden *Tharaphee*.
 And riots in the leafless trees begin
 When scarlet blaze the *Pauk* and *Letpan Bin*.

TĀBAUNG.

This is the time when climbing high,
 Orion glitters in the sky,
 And shining with the moon at night
 Mingles with her's his yellow light.
 The sweet scent of the *Tharaphee*
 And faint smell of the *Padauk* tree
 Is wafted from the misty trees
 Upon a gently souging breeze.
 About the sand-banks of the stream
 The white arms of a river gleam.
 I hear the clamorous return
 Of Wild-duck and of Silver Tern.

TĀGU.

The New Year in its graciousness
 With fragrance everywhere
 Has touched the arid nakedness
 Where leafless trees are bare.
 The gentle passage of the breeze
 Has scattered bloom of *Gangaw* trees.
 The silver moon is riding high]
 As *Yugan* mountain in the sky;
 And stars out-shining stars that be
 Engaged in radiant rivalry

The Stars are a favourite theme with Burmese poets. U. Min himself writes elsewhere :—

High in the Emerald Palace of the night
The *Hpoat-sha* Star has lent a Silver ray
To reinforce the gentle moon-beams' light,
When Moon and Stars meet in the Milky Way.

Burmese poetry affords a wonderful field for research. It has not yet been explored. The rhyme and metre are pleasing and musical, though these are often lost in translating. Their handling needs special care. Their very quality of suggestion forbids too literal rendering. Certain latitude of expression is necessary to bring out their meaning clearly in a foreign language. For instance the literal translation of a rather involved verse is confused, and reads thus :—

Bud branch, bud cup, in a long row. Each in their season ; some yellow, some red, some scarlet, they have blown : very lovable. Which might perhaps be rendered :—

Beloved buds, like tiny cups
Along a branch in row :
Each in their season open—and
Red, Yellow, Scarlet blow.

The work to be successful needs the collaboration of a Burman who can translate accurately into English prose, and of an Englishman capable of putting the prose back into verse. This plan has been attempted here. I am indebted to many Burmese scholars, but particularly to Maung Ba Nyo of Dedaye.

The love themes expose the violent passions of Burmese youths who, during calf-love, usually contemplate suicide once or twice at least in their desperate but passing affairs. If fickle, at any rate love burns fiercely while it lasts :—

Vast as Mount Meru, its islands and seas
More boundless and deathless my love is than these.

Such passion will sweep away the most serious obstacles :—

Out of your path I will hurl
Even Mount Meru a-far.
What do you fear dearest girl?
Only a poor little star !

The maiden waiting the end of her lover's novicehood (all Burmese boys assume the Yellow Robe for a time) is more patient :—

In my garden one or two
Shrubs there are of *Sat-tha Hpu*
On to which the parrots flew.
Do not perch on them my dears.
When my sweetheart comes to me
When he quits the monastery,
Bloom I need, to deck his ears.

Here are a few examples of lullabies with which Burmese mothers sing their babies to sleep ; they are all in common use.

Fetch me a frog from the Meik-hti-la Lake :
Bring me a frog for my little boy's sake.
Froggies will soothe him when ever he cries—
Oh look ! at this tiny frog's big staring eyes.

Baby darling do not cry.
We'll catch pigeons, you and I.
Yellow ones, and black, and white :
Oh ! it's hard to catch them quite.

This ungrateful Poll behold
With its plumage gleaming gold.
As a fledgling fed was he
By Ma Le most tenderly.
Now he's big, he sings a song
Showing he would fain be gone.

Bob-tailed cat who steals the meat,
Pussy with the dreamy eyes—
Bite this naughty boy who cries.

Hi-le-ho ! cradle Oh !
Auntie's horned bull will go
Grazing our garden, oh !

Pleasing as many of these verses are, none are more
delightful than this last one :—

Upon the surface of the moon
Crouches a golden hare.
An ancient man is pounding rice,
And he is also clear.

Or are they but illusions that
Are cast in shadows by the *Nat*
Who paints the twilight of the skies
To charm the tears from the babies eyes ?

CONCLUSION.

COUNTRY-SIDE AND TOWN.

*When the march of time is measured by the Seasons
as they go.*

THE hot, dust-laden months of March, April and May in the 'Dry Zone' are truly abominable. The rest of the year is pleasant, and winter is delightful. Taken as a whole, Burma has a good climate, in spite of the variations which must occur in a country spreading from near the equator to the 28th parallel. The northern and southern parts receive good rain-fall which ensures low temperatures as soon as the Monsoons break, and then even the climate of the 'Dry Zone' is tempered by cool breezes. On the north-east frontier, and amongst the hills, winter is something more than merely 'delightful.' It is a brilliant season of brisk cold, blue sky and sparkling sunshine. The Burmese year is divided into five seasons—winter, spring, summer, rains and then summer again.

Four large trees fill Upper Burma with masses of scarlet bloom in January and February. These are *Pauk Bin*,¹ *Kathit Bin*,² the *Coral Tree* and the

¹ *Butea Frondosa.*

² An *Erythina.*

Silk-Cotton Tree.¹ Thousands of birds, attracted by the nectar, flock to these flowering but leafless trees. There is a Burmese idiom :—" *Noisy as Mynahs on the Silk-Cotton Tree*," which is used of people who are quarrelling. The birds, now in their greatest number and fullest vivacity, are busy courting and nesting, for in the 'Dry Zone' (of which I write specially) the brief Winter has gone, and February is Spring. Later, when wind blows down clouds of fluff from the cotton trees, tailor birds use it to line their wonderful nests, and the country-folk stuff quilts and pillows with it.

The seasons change rapidly at this time of year. A hateful summer rushes upon us, and the heat increases through March. The Burmese say "every note of the cuckoo brings a spoonful of flies" (*O-aw ta hku : Yin ta zun*). A haze of dust gathers, and hangs over the country ; and the sky loses its wonderful blue. Only the birds enjoy this period. The little magpie robins suddenly burst into song. Next to the shama, and to the larks of Japan and Mesopotamia, the magpie robin is the finest songster in the East. I cannot imagine how it has got about that the birds of Burma are songless. Any one, even from his bed, may hear innumerable birds whistling, calling and trilling at dawn at this season. And few birds are more beautiful than our Burmese sun-birds, fly-catchers, bee-eaters, minivets and orioles. Even modest *Shwe Pyi-Zo*, the lora, discards his dull-green plumage and assumes an

¹ *Bombax Malabaricum*, called *Letpan Bin* in Burmese.

amazing coat of black and gold. But Burma is now on the point of losing many of its most charming birds. On the 12th of March wagtails may be seen flying west in millions. This appears to be a preliminary migration, though I have not yet made up my mind about it. A few individual wagtails certainly remain till the end of May. I have seen the forest wagtail on the 10th of May. The return migration begins to arrive on the 14th September, or perhaps a few days earlier.

The first 'Dry Zone' Summer combines the discomforts of a hot weather with the desolation of Autumn. The trees are leafless, gaunt and dusty until 'Mango Showers' clear the atmosphere temporarily during the second week of April. On the 20th, after an intense heat-spell, I once saw hail-stones one inch in diameter: and a dangerous thing it is to be caught in such a bombardment. Then, all at once, the Gold Mohurs break into flames of scarlet blossom. Few sights are more delightful. We have nothing in Burma to compare with the exquisite beauty of an English copse of blue-bells, a bank of primroses, a meadow of cowslips and daffodils, or a hedge of summer roses. All those have sacred associations with the home-land and its incomparable Spring. Still, we have beautiful flowers here too, round which new associations may be woven. There are lotus, and *Taik-par* (a dainty pink creeper), and white masses of *T yok-zāga*¹ on leafless boughs, and *Pādeing-ngo* which, as the name suggests, make the

¹ *Plumeria Acutifolia*.



THE PICNIC.

‘Gold-smith Weep’ with envy at the frail beauty he cannot imitate. Up in the hills there are wonderful lilies, tree orchids, ground orchids, and a host of other wild flowers. Higher still, cherry, plum, baubinia, magnolia and rhododendron have their season of riot; while few pictures are more lovely than a carpet of primulas, or blue buttercups, on the highest grassy or pine-clad slopes of the frontier.¹ And as for blossoms *en masse*, all have admired the crowded water-hyacinth, and the splendid pageant of gold and scarlet when acacia and gold mohur flower together in Sagaing and Mandalay.

Early in April the once naked peepul and cotton trees are fast assuming their foliage. So are the *Htanaung Bin* whose quaintly twisted limbs, reminiscent of Japan, are so typical of Upper Burma. It is the season when tender leaves cast a soft, green haze over the bare branches of *Ingyin*, tamarind and bamboo.

Light showers now lay the dust temporarily, enough to set *Zigwet* the owlet chuckling; and *Tucktoo*, the lizard, asking longingly:—*Mo la? Le la?* (Is it rain? Is it wind?). But the rains do not break properly in Mandalay until the 25th of May. At this season the villagers hold sports and tugs-of-war which are supposed to invoke rain. This is the Burmese New Year, and at the full-moon of *Tāgoo* the Water Festival takes place at which water is thrown about.

¹ See *A Burmese Enchantment*. Pages 174 and 200.

The origin of this custom is obscure, but it was no doubt intended formerly as an invocation.¹ The helpless public on gang-ways and landing stages is at the mercy of small boys with squirts. Formerly even the *Thekins*² were soused, but they can usually escape now by looking very stern and solemn. There is a significance in such small changes in a country where British and Burmese are drifting apart. The old intimacy is no longer possible in these materialistic days. So sympathy and understanding are lost, and the boys withhold their squirts at *Tāgoo*—yet regretfully. Two years ago my flannels were ruined in a watery combat with an unknown but disturbing Burmese maid. Honours were about equal. Last year I got a whole bucket of water to myself through a carriage window. This year they coaxed me—"Will my Lord deign to come out into the garden?" "No" I replied. "Go away. I'm busy:" and as they went down stairs—I got my revenge!

There is something very imposing in the first storms of the year. Lightning flickers through the black wall of clouds. Thunder rumbles back and forth, and little eddies of hot, rain-scented wind skim over the dusty ground, until presently gust after gust smites the trees. At least one hundred big trees were snapped or uprooted in this season's first storm at *Hti-gyaing*, where I happened to be. A calf was killed by hail.

¹ See *A Burmese Loneliness*. Page 27.

² Europeans.

The spires of two wooden shrines were wrecked, and a large *Kālon*, or human-bird, which stood on a pillar fifty feet high, was blown down. With it fell a snake, which we found dead besides the fallen *Kālon*. A cast off skin was wound about the image, leading one to suppose that the snake lived up on top of the pillar fifty feet from the ground, where, I suppose, it caught small birds.

The wind blows steadily from the south during the rains. In places like Meiktila it amounts almost to a gale. The sky of the Dry Zone is overcast. Little rain falls, though the hills and Lower Burma are drenched unceasingly. The tamarinds now finally assume their delicate green foliage. Nothing is so fresh and inviting as the tender green of young rice and young tamarind leaves.

Song of the Paddy fields.

Look all ! look all ! at the white-stared hare
Traverse the plot. And the maidens there,
Close to the trees where the shadows sleep.
Ah ! And the flood in the fields is deep ?
He ! for a boat
A long, slim boat.
He ! for a *laung* that swiftly slips
Cleaving the rice-sea's diamond tips.

(Burmese Song).

So the months pass. *Taik-pan* blossoms on the house again. The Second Summer blazes up for a short while. But the wagtails return with their message that Winter is at hand once more.

Once again the festive season opens in October with illuminations at the full moon of *Thadingyut*.

The time when Lotus open radiantly :
When candles light the Hill of Mandalay.
Like *Merus'* Mount it glitters brilliantly
This festival of lights, when people pay
Their homage, bowing thrice before the shrines
Where ancestors bowed down in ancient times.

(*Burmese Verse, by the Poet U Min.*)

It is the season for tours and camps, the season of clean atmosphere, the season of picnics when gay Burmese parties, the sunshine beating down upon their silks through luminous umbrellas, set out in boats and carts to spend the day beneath the trees of some favourite pagoda.

Burma, *our* Burma, the *real* Burma, is most truly a Wonderland, replete with marvels and mysteries of which the people are half incredulous, yet not willing to be wholly disillusioned. And why rob legend of romance? Why expose our *Nats* to the merciless light of reason? We are not prepared to sacrifice imagination and fancy to a mere vulgar thirst for truth; nor strip a 20th century fairy-land of its gauze-wings and gold-dust. God knows, our world is material enough to warrant a little indulgence. In this preserve the *Nats shall* survive, and tiny houses *must* be built for their accommodation. Here wonderful tales really *are* true—every bit of them. Scientific research explodes a good many myths, but reveals new wonders undreamed

of. Let our research then be scientific, and very tender to Ma Nemi, the Child-*nat* who lives in babies' cradles, and makes them laugh. Any formula which does not accept Ma Nemi as fundamental is unscientific. It can have no place in our philosophy.

The End.

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